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THE
Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk,
MYSTERIES OF A CONVENT,
AND
SIX MONTHS IN A CONVENT.

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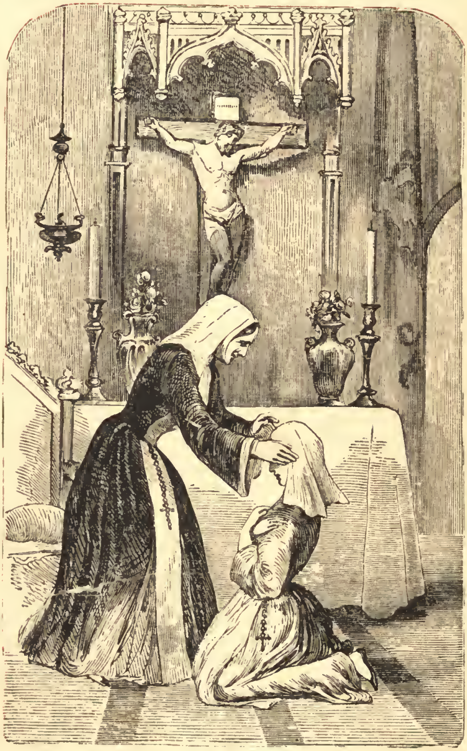

TAKING THE VOW.

AWFUL DISCLOSURES

OF

MARIA MONK,

THE

THRILLING

MYSTERIES

OF A

CONVENT REVEALED!

AND

SIX MONTHS IN A CONVENT.

PHILADELPHIA:
T. B. PETERSON, 101, CHESTNUT STREET.

PREFACE.

IT is to be hoped that the reader of the ensuing narrative will not suppose that it is a fiction, or that the scenes and persons that I have delineated, had not a real existence. It is also desired, that the author of this volume may be regarded not as a voluntary participator in the very guilty transactions which are described; but receive sympathy for the trials which she has endured, and the peculiar situation in which her past experience, and escape from the power of the Superior of the Hotel Dieu Nunnery, at Montreal, and the snares of the Roman Priests in Canada, have left her.

My feelings are frequently distressed and agitated by the recollection of what I have passed through; and by night and by day I have little peace of mind, and few periods of calm and pleasing reflection. Futurity also appears uncertain. I know not what reception this little work may meet with, and what will be the effect of its publication here or in Canada, among strangers, friends, or enemies. I have given the world the truth, so far as I have gone, on subjects of which I am told they are generally ignorant; and I feel perfect confidence, that any facts which may yet be discovered, will confirm my words whenever they can be obtained. Whoever shall explore the Hotel Dieu Nunnery at Montreal, will find unquestionable evidence that the descriptions of the interior of that edifice, given in this book, were furnished by one familiar with them; for whatever alterations may be attempted, there are changes which no mason or carpenter can make and effectually conceal; and therefore there must be plentiful evidence in that Institution, of the truth of my description.

There are living witnesses, also, who ought to be made to speak, without fear of penances, tortures, and death, and possibly their testimony at some future time, may be added, to confirm my statements. There are witnesses I should greatly rejoice to see at liberty; or rather there *were*. Are they living now? or will they be permitted to live after the Priests and Superiors have seen this book? Perhaps the wretched nuns in the cells have already suffered for my sake—perhaps Jane Ray has been silenced for ever, or will be murdered, before she has time to add her most important testimony to mine.

But speedy death in relation only to this world, can be no great calamity to those who lead the life of a nun. The mere recollection of it always makes me miserable. It would distress the reader, should I repeat the dreams with which I am often terrified at night; for I sometimes fancy myself pursued by the worst enemies; frequently I seem as if again shut up in the Convent; often I imagine myself present at the repetition of the worst scenes that I have hinted at or described. Sometimes I stand by the secret place of interment in the cellar; sometimes I think I can hear the shrieks of the helpless females in the hands of atrocious men; and sometimes almost seem actually to look again upon the calm and placid features of St. Frances, as she appeared when surrounded by her murderers.

I cannot banish the scenes and character of this book from my memory. To me it can never appear like an amusing fable, or lose its interest and importance. The story is one which is continually before me, and must return fresh to my mind, with painful emotions, as long as I live. With time, and Christian instruction, and the sympathy and examples of the wise and good, I hope to learn submissively to bear whatever trials are appointed me, and to improve under them all.

Impressed as I continually am with the frightful reality of the painful communications that I have made in this volume, I can only offer to all persons who may doubt or disbelieve my statements, these two things:—

Permit me to go through the Hotel Dieu Nunnery at Montreal, with some impartial ladies and gentlemen, that they may compare my account with the interior parts of the building, into which no persons but the Roman Bishop and Priests are ever admitted; and if they do not find my description true, then discard me as an impostor. Bring me before a court of justice—there I am willing to meet *Latargue*, *Dufreme*, *Phelan*, *Bonin*, and *Richards*, and their wicked companions, with the Superior, and any of the nuns, before a thousand men.

MARIA MONK.

New York, January 11, 1836.

AWFUL DISCLOSURES
OF
MARIA MONK.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY RECOLLECTIONS.

Early life—Religious Education neglected—First School—Entrance into the School of the Congregational Nunnery—Brief Account of the Nuuneries in Montreal—The Congregational Nunnery—The Black Nunnery—The Grey Nunnery—Public Respect for these Institutions—Instructions received—The Catechism—The Bible.

MY parents were both from Scotland, but had been resident in the Lower Canada some time before their marriage, which took place in Montreal, and in that city I have spent most of my life. I was born at St. John's, where they lived for a short time. My father was an officer under the British Government, and my mother has enjoyed a pension on that account ever since his death.

According to my earliest recollections, he was attentive to his family, and had a peculiar passage from the Bible, which often occurred to me in after life. I may very probably have been taught by him, as after his death I did not recollect to have received any instruction at home, and was not even brought up to read the Scriptures; my mother, although nominally a Protestant, not being accustomed to pay attention to her children. She was rather inclined to think well of the Catholics, and often attended their churches. To my want of religious instruction at home, and the ignorance of my Creator and my duty, which was its natural effect, I think I can trace my introduction to convents, and the scenes which I am to describe in the following narrative.

When about six or seven years of age, I went to school to a Mr. Workman, a Protestant, who taught in Sacrament street, and remained several months. There I learned to read and write, and arithmetic as far as division. All the progress I ever made in those branches was gained in that school, as I have never improved in any of them since.

A number of girls of my acquaintance went to school to the nuns of the Congregational Nunnery, or Sisters of Charity, as they are sometimes called. The schools taught by them are perhaps more numerous than some of my readers may imagine. Nuns are sent out from that convent to many of the towns and villages of Canada to teach small schools; and some of them are established as instructresses in different parts of the United States. When I was about ten years old, my mother asked me one day if I should not like to learn to read and write French, and then I began to think seriously of attending the school in the Congregational Nunnery. I had already some acquaintance with that language, sufficient to speak it a little, as I heard it every day, and my mother knew something of it.

I have a distinct recollection of my first entrance into the Nunnery; and the day was an important one in my life, as on it commenced my acquaintance with a convent. I was conducted by some of my young friends along Notre Dame street, till we reached the gate. Entering that, we walked some distance along the side of a building towards a chapel, until we reached a door, stopped, and rung a bell. This was soon opened, and entering, we proceeded through a long covered passage till we took a short turn to the left, soon after which we reached the door of the school-room. On my entrance, the Superior met me, and told me first of all that I must dip my fingers into the holy water at her door, cross myself, and say a short prayer; and this she told me was always required of Protestant as well as Catholic children.

There were about fifty girls in the school, and the nuns professed to teach something of reading, writing, arithmetic, and geography. The methods, however, were very imperfect, and little attention was devoted to them, the time being in a great degree engrossed with lessons in needle-work, which was performed with much skill. The nuns had no very regular parts assigned them in the management of the schools. They were rather rough and unpolished in their manners, often exclaiming, "C'est un menti," (that's a lie,) and "mon Dieu," (my God,) on the most trivial occasions. Their writing was quite poor, and it was not uncommon for them to put a capital letter in the middle of a word. The only book of geography which we studied, was a catechism of geography, from which we learnt by heart a few questions and answers. We were sometimes referred to a map, but it was only to point out Montreal or Quebec, or some other prominent name, while we had no instruction beyond.

It may be necessary, for the information of some of my readers, to mention, that there are three distinct Convents in Montreal, all of different kinds—that is, founded on different plans, and governed by different rules. Their names are as follows:—

1. The Congregational Nunnery.
2. The Black Nunnery, or Convent of Sister Bourgeoise.
3. The Grey Nunnery.

The first of these professes to be devoted entirely to the education of girls. It would require, however, only a proper examination to prove, that with the exception of needle-work, hardly anything is taught excepting prayer and catechism; the instruction in reading, writing, &c., in fact, amounting to very little, and often to nothing. This Convent is adjacent to the next to be spoken of, being separated from it only by a wall. The second professes to be a charitable institution for the care of the sick, and the supply of bread and medicines for the poor; and something is done in these departments of charity, although but an insignificant amount compared with the size of the buildings, and the number of inmates.

The Grey Nunnery, which is situated in a distant part of the city, is also a large edifice, containing departments for the care of insane persons and foundlings. With this, however, I have less personal acquaintance than with either of the others. I have often seen two of the Grey nuns, and know their rules, as well as those of the Congregational Nunnery; they do not confine them always within their walls, like those of the Black Nunnery. These two Convents have their common names (Black and Grey) from the colours of the dresses worn by their inmates.

In all these three Convents there are certain apartments into which strangers can gain admittance, but others from which they are always excluded. In all, large quantities of various ornaments are made by the nuns, which are exposed for sale in the *Ornament Rooms*, and afford large pecuniary receipts every year, which contribute much to their income. In these rooms, visitors often purchase such things as please them, from some of the old and confidential nuns who have the charge of them.

From all that appears to the public eye, the nuns of these Convents are devoted to the charitable object appropriated to each, the labour of making different articles known to be manufactured by them, and the religious observances, which occupy a large portion of their time. They are regarded with much respect by the people at large; and now and then when a novice takes the veil, she is supposed to retire from the temptations and trouble of this world into a state of holy seclusion, where, by prayer, self-mortification, and good deeds, she prepares herself for heaven. Sometimes the Superior of a Convent obtains the character of working miracles: and when such an one dies, it is published through the country, and crowds throng the Convent, who think indulgences are to be derived from bits of her clothes and other things she has possessed; and many have sent articles to be touched to her bed or chair, in which a degree of virtue is thought to remain. I used to participate in such ideas and feelings, and began by degrees to look upon a nun as the happiest of women, and a Convent as the most peaceful, holy, and delightful place of abode. It is true, some pains were taken to impress such views upon me. Some of the priests of the Seminary often visited the Congregational Nunnery, and both catechised and talked with us on religion. The Superior of the Black Nunnery adjoining, also, occasionally came into the school, and enlarged on the advantage we enjoyed in having such teachers, and dropped something now and then relating to her own convent, calculated to make us entertain the highest ideas of it, and make us sometimes think of the possibility of getting into it.

Among the instructions given to us by the priests, some of the most pointed were directed against the Protestant Bible. They often enlarged upon the evil tendency of that book, and told us that but for it many a soul condemned to hell, and suffering eternal punishment, might have been in happiness. They could not say anything in its favour; for that would be speaking against religion and against God. They warned us against its woe, and represented it as a thing very dangerous to our souls. In confirmation of this, they would repeat some of the answers taught us at catechism; a few of which I will here give. We had little catechisms, ("Les Petits Catechismes") put into our hands to study; but the priests soon began to teach us a new set of answers, which were not to be found in our books, from some of which I have received new ideas, and got, as I thought, important light on religious subjects, which confirmed me more in my belief in the Roman Catholic doctrines. Those questions and answers I can still recall with tolerable accuracy, and some of them I will add here. I never have read them, as we were taught them only by word of mouth.

"*Question.* Porquoi le bon Dieu n'a pas fait tous les commandemens?"—"*Response.* Parce que l' homme n'est pas si fort qu'il peut garder tout ses commandemens."

"*Question.* Why did not God make all the commandments?" —"*Answer.* Because man is not strong enough to keep them."

And another: "*Q.* Porquoi l'homme ne lit pas l' Evangile?"— "*A.* Parce que l'esprit de l'homme est trop borne et trop faible pour comprendre qu'est ce que Dieu a écrit."

"*Q.* Why are men not to read the New Testament?"—"*A.* Because the mind of man is too limited and weak to understand what God has written."

These questions and answers are not to be found in the common catechisms in use in Montreal and other places where I have been, but all the children in the Congregational Nunnery were taught them, and many more not found in these books.

CHAPTER II.

CONGREGATIONAL NUNNERY.

Story told by a Fellow Pupil against a Priest—Other Stories—Pretty Mary —Confess to Father Richards—My subsequent confession—Instructions in the Catechism.

THERE was a girl thirteen years old whom I knew in the school, who resided in the neighbourhood of my mother, and with whom I had been familiar. She told me one day at school, of the conduct of a priest with her at confession, at which I was astonished. It was of so criminal and shameful a nature, I could hardly believe it, and yet I had so much confidence that she spoke the truth, that I could not discredit it.

She was partly persuaded by the priest to believe he could not sin, because he was a priest, and that anything he did to her would sanctify her; and yet she seemed somewhat doubtful how she should act. A priest, she had been told by him, is a holy man, and appointed to a holy office, and therefore what would be wicked in other men, could not be so in him. She told me she had informed her mother of it, who expressed no anger nor disapprobation; but only enjoined it upon her not to speak of it; and remarked to her, as priests were not like men, but holy, and sent to instruct and save us, whatever they did was right.

I afterwards confessed to the priest that I had heard the story, and had a penance to perform for indulging a sinful curiosity in making inquiries; and the girl had another for communicating it. I afterwards learnt that other children had been treated in the same manner, and also of similar proceedings.

Indeed it was not long before such language was used to me, and I well remember how my views of right and wrong were shaken by it. Another girl at the school, from a place above Montreal, called the Lac, told me the following story of what had occurred recently in that vicinity. A young squaw, called La Belle Marie, (pretty Mary,) had been seen going to confession at the house of the priest, who lived a little out of the village. La Belle Marie was afterwards missed, and her murdered body was found in the river. A knife was also found bearing the priest's name. Great indignation was excited among the Indians, and the priest immediately absconded, and was never heard from. A note was found on his table addressed to him, telling him to fly, if he was guilty.

It was supposed that the priest was fearful that his conduct might be betrayed by this young female; and he undertook to clear himself by killing her.

These stories struck me with surprise at first, but I gradually began to feel differently, even supposing them true, and to look upon the priests as men incapable of sin; besides, when I first went to confess, which I did to Father Richards in the old French church, since taken down, I heard nothing improper; and it was not until I had been several times that the priests became more and more bold, and were at length indecent in their questions, and even in their conduct when I confessed to them in the Sacristie. This subject, I believe, is not understood nor suspected among Protestants; and it is not my intention to speak of it very particularly, because it is impossible to do so without saying things both shameful and demoralizing.

I will only say here, that when quite a child, I heard from the mouths of the priests at confession what I cannot repeat, with treatment corresponding; and several females in Canada have assured me that they have repeatedly, and indeed regularly, been required to answer the same and other like questions, many of which present to the mind deeds which the most iniquitous and corrupt heart could hardly invent.

There was a frequent change of teachers in the school of the Nunnery, and no regular system was pursued in our instruction. There were many nuns who came and went while I was there, being frequently called in and out without any perceptible reason. They supply school teachers to many of the country towns, usually two to each of the towns with which I was acquainted, besides sending Sisters of Charity to many parts of the United States. Among those whom I saw most was Saint Patrick, an old woman for a nun, that is about forty, very ignorant and gross in her manners, with quite a beard on her face, and very cross and disagreeable. She was sometimes our teacher in sewing, and was appointed to keep order among us. We were allowed to enter only a few of the rooms in the Congregational Nunnery, although it was not considered one of the secluded Convents.

In the Black Nunnery, which is very near the Congregational, is an hospital for sick people from the city; and sometimes some of our boarders, such as were indisposed, were sent there to be cured. I was once taken ill myself and sent there, where I remained a few days.

There were beds enough for a considerable number more. A physician attended it daily, and there are a number of the veiled nuns of that Convent who spend most of their time there.

These would also sometimes read lectures and repeat prayers to us.

After I had been in the Congregational Nunnery about two years, I left it, and attended several different schools for a short time. But I soon became dissatisfied, having many and severe trials to endure at home, which my feelings will not allow me to describe: and as my Catholic acquaintances had often spoken to me in favour of their faith, I was inclined to believe it true, although, as I before said, I knew little of any religion. While out of the nunnery, I saw nothing of religion. If I had, I believe I should never have thought of becoming a nun.

CHAPTER III.

BLACK NUNNERY.

Preparations to become a Novice in the Black Nunnery—Entrance—Occupations of the Novices—The apartments to which they had access—First interview with Jane Ray—Reverence for the Superior—A wonderful Nun—Her reliques—The Holy Good Shepherd, or Nameless Nun—Confession of Novices.

At length I determined to become a Black Nun, and called upon one of the oldest priests in the Seminary, to whom I made known my intention.

The old priest to whom I applied was Father Rocque. He is still alive. He was at that time the oldest priest in the seminary, and carried the Bon Dieu, Good God, as the sacramental wafer is called. When going to administer it in any country place, he used to ride with a man before him, who rang a bell as a signal. When the Canadians heard it, whose habitations he passed, they would come and prostrate themselves to the earth, worshipping it as a God. He was a man of great age, and wore large curls, so that he somewhat resembled his predecessor, Father Roue. He was at that time at the head of the Seminary. This Institution is a large edifice, situated near the Congregational and Black Nunneries, being on the east side of Notre Dame Street. It is the general rendezvous and centre of all the priests in the district of Montreal, and I have been told, supplies all the country as far down as the Three Rivers, which place, I believe, is under the charge of the Seminary of Quebec. About one hundred and fifty priests are connected with that at Montreal, as every small place has one priest, and a number of larger ones have two.

Father Rocque promised to converse with the Superior of the Convent, and proposed my calling again at the end of two weeks, at which time I visited the Seminary again, and was introduced by him to the Superior of the Black Nunnery. She told me she must make some inquiries, before she could give me a decided answer, and proposed to me to take up my abode a few days at the house of a French family in St. Lawrence suburbs, a distant part of the city. Here I remained about a fortnight; during which time I formed some acquaintance with the family, particularly with the mistress of the house, who was a devoted Papist, and had a high respect for the Superior, with whom she stood on good terms.

At length, on Saturday morning about ten o'clock, I called, and was admitted into the Black Nunnery as a novice, much to my satisfaction, for I had a high idea of life in a Convent, secluded, as I supposed the inmates to be, from the world and all its evil influences, and assured of everlasting happiness in heaven. The Superior received me, and conducted me into a large room, where the novices, who are called in French, Postulantes, were assembled, and engaged in their customary occupation of sewing.

Here were about forty of them, and they were collected in groups in different parts of the room, chiefly near the windows; but in each group was found one of the veiled nuns of the convent, whose abode was in the interior apartments, to which no novice was to be admitted. As we entered, the Superior informed the assembly that a new novice had come, and she desired any one present who might have known me in the world to signify it.

Two Miss Feugnees, and a Miss Howard from Vermont, who had been my fellow-pupils in the Congregational Nunnery, immediately recognized me. I was then placed in one of the groups at a distance from them, and furnished by a nun, called Sainte Clotilde, with materials to make a purse, such as priests use to carry the consecrated wafer in, when they go to administer the sacrament to the sick. I well remember my feelings at that time, sitting among a number of strangers, and expecting with painful anxiety the arrival of the dinner-hour. Then, as I knew, ceremonies were to be performed, though for which I was but ill prepared, as I had not yet heard the rules by which I was to be governed, and knew nothing of the forms to be repeated in the daily exercises, except the creed in Latin, and that imperfectly. This was during the time of recreation, as it is called. The only recreation there allowed, however, is that of the mind, and of this there is but little. We were kept at work, and permitted to speak with each other only in hearing of the old nuns who sat by us. We proceeded to dinner in couples, and ate in silence while a lecture was read.

The novices had access to only eight of the apartments of the Convent; and whatever else we wished to know, we could only conjecture. The sleeping room was in the second story, at the end of the western wing. The beds were placed in rows, without curtains or any thing else to obstruct the view; and in one corner was a small room partitioned off, in which was the bed of a night-watch, that is, the old nun who was appointed to oversee us for the night. In each side of the partition were two holes, through which she could look out upon us whenever she pleased. Her bed was a little raised above the level of the others. There was a lamp hung in the middle of our chamber, which showed everything to her very distinctly; and as she had no light in her little room, we never could perceive whether she was awake or asleep. As we knew that the slightest deviation from the rules would expose us to her observation as well as to that of our companions, in whom it was a virtue to betray one another's faults, continual exposure to suffer what I disliked, and had my mind occupied in thinking of what I was to do next, and what I must avoid. Though I soon learned the rules and ceremonies we had to pass, which were many, and we had to be very particular in their observance, we were employed in different kinds of work while I was a novice. The most beautiful specimen of the nun's manufacture which I saw, was a rich carpet made of fine worsted, which had been begun before my acquaintance with the Convent, and was finished while I was there. This was sent as a present to the King of England, as an expression of gratitude for the money annually received from the government. It was about forty yards in length, and very handsome. We were ignorant of the amount of money thus received. The Convent of the Grey Nuns as also received funds from the government, though on some account or other, had not for several years.

I was sitting by a window at one time with a girl named Jane M'Coy, when one of the old nuns came up and spoke to us in a tone of liveliness and kindness, which seemed strange in a place where every thing appeared so cold and reserved. Some remarks which she made were evidently intended to cheer and encourage me, and made me think that she felt some interest in me. I do not recollect what she said, but I remember it gave me pleasure.

I also remember that her manners struck me singularly. She was rather old for a nun—that is, probably thirty; her figure large, her face wrinkled, and her dress careless. She seemed also to be under less restraint than the others, and this I afterwards found was the case. She sometimes even set the rules at defiance. She would speak aloud when silence was required, and sometimes walk about when she ought to have kept her place: she would even say and do things on purpose to make us laugh, and, although often blamed for her conduct, had her offences frequently passed over, when others would have been punished with penances.

I learnt that this woman had always been singular. She never would consent to take a saint's name on receiving the veil, and had always been known by her own, which was Jane Ray. Her irregularities were found to be numerous, and penances were of so little use in governing her, that she was pitied by some, who thought her partially insane. She was, therefore, commonly spoken of as mad Jane Ray; and when she committed a fault, it was apologized for by the Superior or other nuns, on the ground that she did not know what she did.

The occupations of a novice in the Black Nunnery are not such as some of our readers may suppose. They are not employed in studying the higher branches of education: they are not offered any advantages for storing their minds, or polishing their manners; they are not taught even reading, writing, or arithmetic; much less any of the more advanced branches of knowledge. My time was chiefly employed, at first, in work and prayers. It is true, during the last year I studied a great deal, and was required to work but very little; but it was the study of prayers in French and Latin, which I had merely to commit to memory, to prepare for the easy repetition of them on my reception, and after I should be admitted as a nun.

Among the wonderful events which had happened in the Convent, that of the sudden conversion of a gay young lady of the city into a nun appeared to me one of the most remarkable. The story which I first heard while a novice, made a deep impression upon my mind. It was nearly as follows:

The daughter of a wealthy citizen of Montreal was passing the church of Bon Secours one evening, on her way to a ball, when she was suddenly thrown down upon the steps or near the door, and received a severe shock. She was taken up, and removed first, I think, into the church, but soon into the Black Nunnery, which she determined to join as a nun; instead, however, of being required to pass through a long novitiate, (which usually occupies about two years and a half, and is abridged only where the character is peculiarly exemplary and devout,) she was permitted to take the veil without delay, being declared by God to a priest to be in a state of sanctity. The meaning of this expression is, that she was a real saint, and already in a great measure raised above the world and its influences, and incapable of sinning; possessing the power of intercession, and a proper object to be addressed in prayer. This remarkable individual, I was further informed, was still in the Convent, though I never was allowed to see her; she did not mingle with the other nuns, either at work, worship, or meals; for she had no need of food, and not only her soul, but her body, was in heaven a great part of her time. What added, if possible, to the reverence and mysterious awe with which I thought of her, was the fact I learned, that she had no name. The titles used in speaking of her were, the holy saint, reverend mother, or saint bon pasteur, (the holy good shepherd.)

It is wonderful that we could have carried our reverence for the Superior so far as we did, although it was the direct tendency of many instructions and regulations, indeed of the whole system, to permit, even to foster, a superstitious regard for her. One of us was occasionally called into her room to cut her nails, or dress her hair; and we would often collect the clippings, and distribute them to each other, or preserve them with the utmost care. I once picked up all her stray hairs I could find after combing her head, bound them together, and kept them for some time, until she told me I was not worthy to possess things so sacred. Jane M'Coy and I were once sent to alter a dress for the Superior. I gathered up all the bits of thread, made a little bag, and put them into it for safe preservation. This I wore a long time round my neck, so long, indeed, that I wore out a number of strings, which I remember I had replaced with new ones. I believed it to possess the power of removing pain, and have often prayed to it to cure the tooth-ache, &c. Jane Ray sometimes professed to outdo us all in devotion to the Superior, and would pick up the feathers after making her bed. These she would distribute among us, saying, "When the Superior dies, relics will begin to grow scarce, and you had better supply yourselves in season." Then she would treat the whole matter in some way to turn it into ridicule. Equally contradictory would she appear, when occasionally she would obtain leave from her Superior to tell her dreams. With a serious face, which sometimes imposed upon all of us, and made us half believe she was in a perfect state of sanctity, she would narrate in French some unaccountable vision which she said she had enjoyed; then turning round, would say, "There are some who do not understand me; you all ought to be informed." And then she would say something totally different in English, which put us to the greatest agony for fear of laughing. Sometimes she would say she expected to be Superior herself one of those days, and other things which I have not room to repeat.

While I was in the Congregational Nunnery, I had gone to the parish church whenever I was to confess, for although the nuns had a private confession-room in the building, the boarders were taken in parties through the streets, on different days, by some of the nuns, to confess in the church; but in the Black Nunnery, as we had a chapel, and priests attending in the confessionals, we never left the building.

Our confessions there as novices were always performed in one way, so that it may be sufficient to describe a single case. Those of us who were to confess at a particular time, took our places on our knees near the confession-box, and, after having repeated a number of prayers, &c., prescribed in our book, came up one at a time and kneeled beside a fine wooden lattice-work, which entirely separated the confessor from us, yet permitted us to place our faces almost to his ear, and nearly concealed his countenance from our view, even when so near. I recollect how the priests used to recline their heads on one side, and often covered their faces with their handkerchiefs, while they heard me confess my sins, and put questions to me, which were often of the most improper and revolting nature, naming crimes both unthought of and inhuman. Still, strange as it may seem, I was persuaded to believe that all this was their duty, or at least that it was done without sin.

Veiled nuns would often appear in the chapel at confession; though, as I understood, they generally confessed in private. Of the plan of their confession-rooms I had no information; but I supposed the ceremony to be conducted much on the same plan as in the chapel and in the church, viz., with a lattice interposed between the confessor and the confessing.

Punishments were sometimes resorted to while I was a novice, though but seldom. The first time I ever saw a gag, was one day when a young novice had done something to offend the Superior. This girl I always had compassion for, because she was very young, and an orphan. The Superior sent for a gag, and expressed her regret at being compelled, by the bad conduct of the child, to proceed to such a punishment; after which she put it into her mouth, so far as to keep it open, and then let it remain for some time before she took it out. There was a leathern strap fastened to each end, and buckled to the back part of the head.

CHAPTER IV.

Displeased with the Convent—Left it—Residence at St. Denis—Relics—Marriage—Return to the Black Nunnery—Objections made by some Novices.

After I had been a novice four or five years, that is from the time I commenced school in the Convent, one day I was treated by one of the nuns in a manner which displeased me, and because I expressed some resentment, I was required to beg her pardon. Not being satisfied with this, although I complied with the command, nor with the coldness with which the Superior treated me, I determined to quit the Convent at once, which I did without asking leave. There would have been no obstacle to my departure, I presume, novice as I then was, if I had asked permission; but I was too much displeased to wait for that, and went home without speaking to any one on the subject.

I soon after visited the town of St. Denis, where I saw two young ladies with whom I had formerly been acquainted in Montreal, and one of them a former school-mate at Mr. Workman's School. After some conversation with me, and learning that I had known a lady who kept a school in the place, they advised me to apply to her to be employed as her assistant teacher; for she was then instructing the government school in that place.

I visited her, and found her willing, and I engaged at once as her assistant.

The government society paid her £20 a year; she was obliged to teach ten children gratuitously; might have fifteen pence a month, about a quarter of a dollar, for each ten scholars more, and then she was at liberty, according to the regulations, to demand as much as she pleased for the other pupils. The course of instruction as required by the society, embraced only reading, writing, and what was called ciphering, though I think improperly. The only books used were a spelling, l' Instruction de la Jeunesse, the Catholic New Testament, and l' Histoire de Canada. When these had been read through, in regular succession, the children were dismissed as having completed their education. No difficulty is found in making the common French Canadians content with such an amount of instruction as this; on the contrary, it is often found very hard indeed to prevail upon them to send their children at all, for they say it takes too much of the love of God from them to send them to school. The teacher strictly complied with the requisitions of the society in whose employment she was, and the Roman Catholic catechism was regularly taught in the school, as much from choice, as from submission to authority, as she was a strict Catholic. I had brought with me the little bag before mentioned, in which I had so long kept the clippings of the thread left after making a dress for the Superior. Such was my regard for it, that I continued to wear it constantly round my neck, and to feel the same reverence for its supposed virtues as before. I occasionally had the tooth-ache during my stay at St. Denis, and then always relied on the influence of my little bag. On such occasions I would say—"By the virtue of this bag may I be delivered from the tooth-ache!" and I supposed that when it ceased it was owing to that cause.

While engaged in this manner, I became acquainted with a man who soon proposed marriage; and, young and ignorant of the world as I was, I heard his offers with favour. On consulting with my friend, she expressed a friendly interest to me, advised me against taking such a step, and especially as I knew so little about the man, except that a report was circulated unfavourable to his character. Unfortunately, I was not wise enough to listen to her advice, and hastily married. In a few weeks I had occasion to repent of the step I had taken, as the report proved true—a report which I thought justified, and indeed required, our separation. After I had been in St. Denis about three months, finding myself thus situated, and not knowing what else to do, I determined to return to the Convent, and pursue my former intention of becoming a Black Nun, could I gain admittance. Knowing the many inquiries the Superior would make relative to me during my absence, before leaving St. Denis I agreed with the lady with whom I had been associated as a teacher, (when she went to Montreal, which she did very frequently) to say to the Lady Superior I had been under her protection during my absence, which would satisfy and stop further inquiry; as I was sensible, should they know I had been married I should not gain admittance.

I soon left and returned to Montreal, and, on reaching the city, I visited the Seminary, and in another interview with the Superior of it, communicated my wish, and desired her to procure my re-admission as a novice. Little delay occurred.

After leaving for a short time, she returned and told me that the Superior of the Convent had consented, and I was soon introduced into her presence.

She blamed me for my conduct in leavingthe nunnery, but told me that I ought to be ever grateful to my guardian angel for taking care of me, unless prohibited by the Superior; and this she promised me. The money usually required for the admission of novices had not been expected from me. I had been admitted the first time without any such requisition; but now I chose to pay for my re-admission. I knew that she was able to dispense with such a demand as well in this as in the former case, and she knew that I was not in possession of any thing like the sum required.

But I was bent on paying to the Nunnery, and accustomed to receive the doctrine often repeated to me before that time, that when the advantage of the church was consulted, the steps taken were justifiable, let them be what they would; I therefore resolved to obtain money on false pretences, confident that if all were known, I should be far from displeasing the Superior. I went to the brigade-major, and asked him to give me the money payable to my mother from her pension, which amounted to about thirty dollars, and without questoning my authority to receive it in her name, he gave it me.

From several of their friends I obtained small sums under the name of loans, so that altogether I had soon raised a number of pounds, with which I hastened to the Nunnery, and deposited a part in the hands of the Superior. She received the money with evident satisfaction, though he must have known that I could not have obtained it honestly; and I was at once re-admitted as a novice.

Much to my gratification, not a word fell from the lips of any of my old associates in relation to my unceremonious departure, nor my voluntary return. The Superior's orders, I had not a doubt, had been explicitly laid down, and they certainly were carefully obeyed, for I never heard an allusion made to that subject during my subsequent stay in the Convent, except that, when alone, the Superior would sometimes say a little about it.

There were numbers of young ladies who entered awhile as novices, and became weary or disgusted with some things they observed, and remained but a short time. One of my cousins, who lived at Lachine, named Reed, spent about a fortnight in the Convent with me. She however, conceived such an antipathy to the priests, that she used expressions which offended the Superior.

The first day that she attended mass, while at dinner with us in full community, she said before us all, "What a rascal that priest was, to preach against his best friend!"

All stared at such an unusual exclamation, and some one enquired what she meant.

"I say," she continued, "he has been preaching against him who has given him his bread. Do you suppose that if there were no devil, there would be any priests?"

This bold young novice was immediately dismissed, and in the afternoon we had a long sermon from the Superior on the subject.

It happened that I one day got a leaf of an English Bible which had been brought into the Convent, wrapped around some sewing silk, purchased at a store in the city. For some reason or other, I determined to commit to memory a chapter it contained, which I soon did. It is the only chapter I ever learnt in the Bible, and I can now repeat it. It is the second of St. Matthew's gospel. "Now when Jesus was born at Bethlehem in Judea," &c. It happened that I was observed reading the paper, and when the nature of it was discovered. I was condemned to do penance for my offence.

Great dislike to the Bible was shown by those who conversed with me about it, and several have remarked at me at different times, that if it were not for that book, Catholics would never be led to renounce their own faith.

I have heard passages read from the Evangile, relating to the death of Christ; the conversion of Paul; a few chapters from St. Matthew, and perhaps a few others. The priests would also sometimes take a verse or two, and preach from it. I have read St.

Peter's life, but only on the book called the "Lives of the Saints." He, I understood, has the keys of heaven and hell, and has founded our church. As for Saint Paul, I remember, as I was taught to understand it, that he was once a great persecutor of the Roman *Catholics*, until he became convicted, and confessed to one of the *father confessors*, I don't know which. For who can expect to be forgiven, who does not become a Catholic, and confess?

CHAPTER V.

Received Confirmation—Painful Feelings—Specimens of Instructions received on the Subject.

The day on which I received Confirmation was a distressing one to me. I believed the doctrine of the Roman Catholics, and according to them I was guilty of three mortal sins; concealing something at confession, sacrilege, in putting the body of Christ in the sacrament at my feet, and by receiving it while not in a state of grace! and now I had been led into all those sins in consequence of my marriage, which I never had acknowledged, as it would have cut me off from being admitted as a nun.

On the day, therefore, when I went to the church to be confirmed with a number of others, I suffered extremely from the reproaches of my conscience. I knew, at least I believed, as I had been told, that a person who had been anointed with the holy oil of confirmation on the forehead, and dying in the state in which I was, would go down to hell, and, in the place where the oil had been rubbed, the names of my sins would blaze out of my forehead; these would be a sign by which the devils would know me, and would torment me the worse for them. I was thinking of all this, while I was sitting in the pew, waiting to receive the oil. I felt however some consolation, as I often did afterwards, when my sins came to my mind: and this consolation I derived from another doctrine of the church, viz., that a bishop could absolve me from all these sins any minute before my death; and I intended to confess them all to a bishop before leaving the world. At length the moment for administering of the "sacrament" arrived, and a bell was rung. Those who had come to be confirmed had brought tickets from their confessors, and those were thrown into a hat, and carried around by a priest, who in turn handed each to a bishop, by which he learned the name of each of us, and applied a little of the oil to the foreheads. This was immediately rubbed off by a priest with a bit of cloth quite roughly.

I went home with some qualms of conscience, and often thought with dread of the following tale, which I have heard told, to illustrate the sinfulness of conduct like mine.

A priest was once travelling, when just as he was passing by a house, his horse fell on his knees, and would not rise. His rider dismounted and went in, to learn the cause of so extraordinary an occurrence. He found there a woman near death, to whom a priest was trying to administer the sacrament, but without success; for every time she attempted to swallow it, it was thrown back out of her mouth into the chalice. He perceived it was owing to unconfessed sin, and took away the holy wafer from her: on which his horse rose from his knees, and he pursued his journey.

I often remembered also that I had been told, that we shall have as many devils biting us, if we go to hell, as we have unconfessed sins on our consciences.

I was required to devote myself for about a year to the study of the prayers and practice of the ceremonies necessary on the reception of a nun. This I found a very tedious duty; but as I was released in a great degree from the daily labours usually demanded of novices, I felt little disposition to complain.

CHAPTER VI.

Taking the veil—Interview afterwards with the Superior—Surprise and horror at the disclosures—Resolution to submit.

I WAS introduced into the Superior's room on the evening preceding the day on which I was to take the veil, to have an interview with the bishop. The Superior was present, and the interview lasted about half an hour. The bishop on this as on other occasions appeared to be habitually rough in his manners. His address was by no means prepossessing.

Before I took the veil, I was ornamented for the ceremony, and was clothed in a dress belonging to the Convent, which was used on such occasions; and placed not far from the altar in the chapel, in the view of a number of spectators, who had assembled, in number, perhaps about forty. Taking the veil is an affair which occurs so frequently in Montreal, that it has long ceased to be regarded as a novelty; and, although notice had been given in the French parish church as usual, only a small audience assembled as I have mentioned.

Being well prepared with a long training, and frequent rehearsals, for what I was to perform, I stood waiting in my large flowing dress for the appearance of the bishop. He soon presented himself, entering by a door behind the altar ; I then threw myself at his feet, and asked him to confer upon me the veil. He expressed his consent; and then turning to the Superior, I threw myself prostrate at her feet, according to my instructions, repeating what I have before done at rehearsals, and made a movement as if to kiss her feet. This she prevented, or appeared to prevent, catching me by a sudden motion of her hand, and granted my request. I then kneeled before the Holy Sacrament, that is a large round wafer held by the Bishop between his fore-finger and thumb, and made my vows.

This wafer I had been taught to regard with the utmost veneration as the real body of Jesus Christ, the presence of which made the vows that were uttered before it binding in the most solemn manner.

After taking the vows, I proceeded to a small apartment behind the altar, accompanied by four nuns, where there was a coffin prepared with my nun's name engraved upon it:

"SAINT EUSTACE."

My companions lifted it by four handles attached to it, while I threw off my dress, and put on that of a nun of Sœur Bourgeoise; and then we all returned to the chapel. I proceeded first, and was followed by four nuns, the Bishop naming a number of worldly pleasures in rapid succession, in reply to which I as rapidly repeated, "Je renounce, je renounce, je renounce,"—I renounce, I renounce, I renounce.

The coffin was then placed in front of the altar, and I advanced to place myself in it. This coffin was to be deposited, after the ceremony, in an out-house, to be preserved until my death, when it was to receive my corpse. There were reflections which

I naturally made at that time, but I stepped in, extended myself, and lay still. A pillow had been placed at the head of the coffin, to support my head in a comfortable position. A large thick black cloth was then spread over me, and the chanting of Latin hymns immediately commenced. My thoughts were not the most pleasing during the time I lay in that situation. The pall, or Drap Mortel, as the cloth is called, had a strong smell of incense, which was always disagreeable to me, and then proved almost suffocating. I recollected the story of the novice, who, in taking the veil, lay down in her coffin like me, and was covered in the same manner, but on the removal of the covering was found dead.

When I was uncovered, I rose, stepped out of my coffin, and kneeled. Other ceremonies then followed, of no particular interest; after which the music commenced, and here the whole was finished. I then proceeded from the chapel, and returned to the Superior's room, followed by the other nuns, who walked two by two, in their customary manner, with their hands folded on their breasts, and their eyes cast down upon the floor. The nun who was to be my companion in future, then walked at the end of the procession. On reaching the Superior's door they all left me, and I entered alone, and found her with the Bishop and two Priests.

The Superior now informed me that having taken the black veil, it only remained that I should swear the three oaths customary on becoming a nun; and that some explanation would be necessary from her. I was now, she told me, to have access to every part of the edifice, even to the cellar, where two of the sisters were imprisoned for causes which she did not mention. I must be informed that one of my great duties was to obey the priests in all things; and this I soon learnt, to my utter astonishment and horror, was to live in the practice of criminal intercourse with them. I expressed some of the feelings which this announcement excited in me, which came upon me like a flash of lightning; but the only effect was to set her arguing with me, in favour of the crime, representing it as a virtue acceptable to God, and honourable to me. The priests, she said, were not situated like other men, being forbidden to marry; while they lived secluded, laborious, and self-denying lives for our salvation. They might, indeed, be considered our saviours, as without their service we could not obtain pardon of sin, and must go to hell. Now it was our solemn duty, on withdrawing from the world, to consecrate our lives to religion, to practice every species of self-denial. We could not be too humble, nor mortify our feelings too far; this was to be done by opposing them, and acting contrary to them; and what she proposed was, therefore, pleasing in the sight of God. I now felt how foolish I had been to place myself in the power of such persons as were around me.

From what she said, I could draw no other conclusions but that I was required to act like the most abandoned of beings, and that all my future associations were habitually guilty of the most heinous and detestable crimes. When I repeated my expressions of surprise and horror, she told me that such feelings were very common at first, and that many other nuns had expressed themselves as I did, who had long since changed their minds. She even said, that on her entrance into the nunnery, she had felt like me.

Doubts, she declared, were among our greatest enemies. They would lead us to question every point of duty, and induce us to waver at every step. They arose only from remaining imperfections, and were always evidences of sin. Our only way was to dismiss them immediately, repent and confess them. Priests, she insisted, could not sin. It was a thing impossible. Everything that they did, and wished, was of course right. She hoped I would see the reasonableness and duty of the oaths I was then to take, and be faithful to them.

She gave me another piece of information, which excited other feelings in me, scarcely less dreadful. Infants were sometimes born in the Convent, but they were always baptized, and immediately strangled. This secured their everlasting happiness; for the baptism purifies them from all sinfulness, and being sent out of the world before they had time to do anything wrong, they were at once admitted into heaven. How happy, she exclaimed, are those who secure immortal happiness to such little beings! Their souls would thank those who kill their bodies, if they had it in their power.

Into what a place, and among what society, had I been admitted. How different did a convent now appear from what I supposed it to be. The holy women I had always fancied the nuns to be, the venerable Lady Superior, what are they? And the priests of the Seminary adjoining, (some of whom, indeed, I had reason to think were base and profligate men,) what were they all? I now learned that they were often admitted into the nunnery, and allowed to indulge in the greatest crimes, which they and others call virtues.

And having listened for some time to the Superior alone, a number of the nuns were admitted, and took a free part in the conversation. They concurred in everything which she told me, and repeated, without any signs of shame or compunction, things which criminated themselves. I must acknowledge the truth, and declare that all this had an effect upon my mind. I questioned whether I might not be in the wrong, and felt as if their reasoning might have some just foundation. I had been several years under the tuition of Catholics, and was ignorant of the Scriptures, and unaccustomed to the society, example, and conversation of Protestants; had not heard any appeal to the Bible as authority, but had been taught, both by precept and example, to receive as truth everything said by the priests. I had not heard their authority questioned, nor anything said of any other standard of faith but their declarations. I had long been familiar with the corrupt and licentious expressions which some of them use at confessions, and believed that other women were also. I had no standard of duty to refer to, and no judgment of my own which I knew how to use, or thought of using.

All around me insisted that my doubts proved only my own ignorance and sinfulness; that they knew by experience that they would soon give place to true knowledge, and an advance in religion; and I felt something like indecision.

Still there was so much that disgusted me in the discovery I had now made, of the debased characters around me, that I would most gladly have escaped from the nunnery, and never returned. But that was a thing not to be thought of. I was in their power, and this I deeply felt, while I thought there was not one among the whole number of nuns to whom I could look for kindness. There was one, however, who began to speak to me at length in a tone that gained something of my confidence,—the nun whom I have mentioned before as distinguished by her oddity, Jane Ray, who made us so much amusement when I was a novice. Although, as I have remarked, there was nothing in her face, form, or manners, to give me any pleasure, she addressed me with apparent friendliness; and while she seemed to concur with some things spoken by them, took an opportunity to whisper a few words in my ear, unheard by them, intimating that I had better comply with everything the Superior desired, if I would save my life. I was somewhat alarmed before, but I now became much more so, and determined to make no further resistance. The Superior then made me repeat the three oaths; and, when I had sworn them, I was shown into one of the community-rooms, and remained some time with the nuns, who were released from their usual employments, and enjoying a recreation day, on account of the admission of a new sister. My feelings during the remainder of the day I shall not attempt to describe, but pass on to mention the ceremonies that took place at dinner. This description may give an idea of the manner in which we always took our meals, although there were some points in which the breakfast and supper were different.

At eleven o'clock the bell rang for dinner, and the nuns all took their places in a double row, in the same order as that in which they left the chapel in the morning, except that my companion and myself were stationed at the head of the line. Standing thus for a moment, with our hands placed one on the other over the breast, and hidden in our large cuffs, with our heads bent forward, and eyes fixed on the floor, an old nun, who stood at the door, clapped her hands as a signal for us to proceed; and the procession moved on, while we all commenced the repetition of litanies. We walked on in this order, repeating all the way until we reached the door of the dining-room, where we were divided into two lines; those on the right passing down the side of the long table, and those on the left the other, till all were in; and each stopped in her place. The plates were all arranged, each with a knife, fork, and spoon, rolled up in a napkin, and tied round with a linen band marked with the owner's name. My own plate, knife, &c., were prepared like the rest: and on the band around them I found my new name written—"Saint Eustace."

There we stood till all had concluded the litany, when the old nun, who had taken her place at the head of the table next the door, said the prayer before meat, beginning, "Benedicite," and we sat down. I do not remember of what our dinner consisted, but we usually had soup, and some plain dish of meat; the remains of which were occasionally served up at supper as a fricasee. One of the nuns, who had been appointed to read that day, rose, and begun a lecture from a book put into her hands by the Superior, while the rest of us ate in perfect silence. The nun who reads during dinner, stays afterwards to dine. As fast as we finished our meals, each rolled up her knife, fork, and spoon, in her napkin, and bound them together with the band, and sat with hands folded. The old nun then said a short prayer, arose, stepped a little aside, clapped her hands, and we marched towards the door, bowing as we passed, before a little chapel, or glass box, containing a wax image of the infant Jesus.

Nothing important occurred till late in the afternoon, when, as I was sitting in the community-room, Father Dufresne called me out, saying, he wished to speak with me. I feared what was his intention; but I dared not disobey. In a private apartment, he treated me in a brutal manner; and, from two other priests, I afterwards received similar usage that evening. Father Dufresne afterwards appeared again; and I was compelled to remain in company with him until morning.

I am assured that the conduct of priests in our Convent had never been exposed, and it is not imagined by the people of the United States. This induces me to say what I do, notwithstanding the strong reasons I have to let it remain unknown. Still I cannot force myself to speak on such subjects except in the most brief manner.

CHAPTER VII.

Daily ceremonies—Jane Ray among the nuns.

On Thursday morning, the bell rang at half-past six to waken us. The old nun who was acting as night-watch immediately spoke aloud:

"Voici le Seigneur qui vient." (Behold the Lord cometh.) The nuns all responded:

"Allons—y devant lui." (Let us go and meet him.)

We then rose immediately, and dressed as expeditiously as possibly, stepping into the passage-way, at the foot of our bed, as soon as we were ready, and taking place each beside her opposite companion. Thus we were soon drawn up in a double row the whole length of the room, with our hands folded across our breasts, and concealed in the broad cuffs of our sleeves. Not a word was uttered. When the signal was given, we all proceeded to the community-room, which is spacious, and took our places in rows facing the entrance, near which the Superior was seated in a vergiere.

We first repeated "Au nom du Père, du Fils, et du Saint Esprit—Aninsi soit il." (In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,—Amen.)

We then kneeled and kissed the floor; then, still on our knees, we said a very long prayer, beginning: "Divin Jesus, sauveur de mon ame," (Divine Jesus, Saviour of my soul.) Then came the Lord's prayers, three Hail Marys, four creeds, and five confessions, (confesse â Dieu.)

Next we repeated the ten commandments. Then we repeated the acts of faith, and a prayer to the Virgin, in Latin, which like everything else in Latin, I never understood a word of. Next we said litanies of the Holy Name of Jesus, in Latin, which were afterwards to be repeated several times in the course of the day. Then came the prayer for the beginning of the day; then bending down, we commenced the Orison Mental, (or Mental Orison,) which lasted about an hour and a half.

This exercise was considered peculiarly solemn. We were told in the nunnery that a certain saint was saved by the use of it, as she never omitted it. It consists of several parts: First, the Superior read to us a chapter from a book, which occupied five minutes. Then profound silence prevailed for fifteen minutes, during which we were meditating upon it. Then she read another chapter of equal length on a different subject, and we meditated upon that another quarter of an hour; and after a third reading and meditation, we finished the exercise with a prayer, called an act of contrition, in which we asked forgiveness for the sins committed during the Orison.

During this hour and a half I became very weary, having before been kneeling for some time, and having then to sit in another position more uncomfortable, with my feet under me, and my hands clasped, and my body went humbly forward, with my head bowed down.

When the Orison was over, we all rose to the upright kneeling posture, and repeated several prayers, and the litanies of the providences, "providence de Dieu," &c., then followed a number of Latin prayers, which we repeated on the way to mass, for in the nunnery we had mass daily.

When mass was over, we proceeded in our usual order to the eating-room to breakfast, practising the same forms which I have described at dinner. Having made our meal in silence, we repeated the litanies of the "holy name of Jesus," as we proceeded to the community-room; and such as had not finished them on their arrival, threw themselves upon their knees, and remained there until they had gone through with them, and then kissing the floor, rose again.

At nine o'clock commenced the lecture, which was read by a nun appointed to perform that duty that day: all the rest of us in the room being engaged in work.

The nuns were at this time distributed in different community rooms, at different kinds of work, and each was listening to a lecture. This exercise continued until ten o'clock, when the recreation-bell rang. We still continued our work, but the nuns began to converse with each other, on subjects permitted by the rules, in the hearing of the old nuns, one of whom was seated in each of the groups.

At half-past ten the silence bell rang, and this conversation instantly ceased, and the recitation of some Latin prayers commenced, which continued half an hour.

At eleven o'clock the dinner-bell rang, and we went through the forms and ceremonies of the preceding day. We proceeded two by two. The old nun who had the command of us, clapped her hands as the first couple reached the door, when we stopped. The first two dipped their fingers into the font, touched the holy water to the breast, forehead, and each side, thus forming a cross, said, "In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Amen," and then walked on to the dining-room repeating the litanies. The rest followed their example. On reaching the door the couples divided, and the two rows of nuns marched up, stopped, and faced the table against their plates. There we stood, repeating the close of the litany aloud. The old nun pronounced

"BENEDICTE,"

and we sat down. One of our number began to read a lecture, which continued during the whole meal; she stays to eat after the rest have retired. When we had dined, each of us folded up our napkin, and again folded her hands. The old nun then repeated a short prayer in French, and stepping aside from the head of the table, let us pass out as we came in. Each of us bowed in passing the little chapel near the door, which is a glass-case, containing a waxen figure of the infant Jesus. When we reached the community-room we took our places in rows, and kneeled upon the floor, while a nun read aloud, "Douleurs de notre Sainte Marie," (the sorrows of our holy Mary.) At the end of each verse we responded "Ave Maria." We then repeated again the litany of the providences and the

"BENISSANTE."

Then we kissed the floor, and, rising, took our work, with leave to converse on permitted subjects—this is what is called *recreation*—till one o'clock. We then began to repeat litanies, one at a time in succession, still engaged in sewing, for an hour.

At two o'clock commenced the afternoon lectures, which lasted till near three. At that hour one of the nuns stood up in the middle of the room, and asked each of us a question out of the catechism; and such as were unable to answer correctly were obliged to kneel, until that exercise was concluded, upon as many dry peas as there were verses in the chapter out of which they were questioned. This seems like a penance of no great importance; but I have sometimes kneeled on peas until I suffered great inconvenience, and even pain. It soon makes one feel as if needles were running through the skin; whoever thinks it a trifle had better try it.

At four o'clock recreation commenced, when we were allowed, as usual, to speak to each other while at work.

At half-past four we began to repeat prayers in Latin, while we worked, and concluded about five o'clock, when we commenced repeating the "prayers for the examination of conscience," the "prayer after confession," the "prayer before sacrament," and the "prayer after sacrament." Thus we continued our work until dark, when we laid it aside, and began to go over the same prayers which we had repeated in the morning, with the exception of the orison mental; instead of that long exercise, we examined our consciences, to determine whether we had performed the resolution we had made in the morning, and such as had kept it repeated an "acte de joie," or expression of gratitude; while such as had not, said an "acte de contrition."

When the prayers were concluded, any nun who had been disobedient in the day, knelt and asked pardon of the Superior and her companions "for the scandal she had caused them," and then requested the Superior to give her a penance of perform. When all the penances had been imposed, we all proceeded to the eating-room to supper, repeating litanies on the way.

At supper, the ceremonies were the same as at dinner, except that there was no lecture read. We ate in silence, and went out bowing to the chapelle, and repeating litanies. Returning to the community-room, which we had left, we had more prayers to repeat, which are called *La couronne*, (crown,) which consists of the following parts:

1st. Four Paters.
2nd. Four Ave Marias.
3rd. Four Gloria Patria.
4th. Benissez, Santeys.

At the close of these we kissed the floor; after which we had recreation till half-past eight o'clock, being allowed to converse on permitted subjects, but closely watched, and not allowed to sit in the corners.

At half-past eight a bell was rung, and a chapter was read to us, in a book of meditations, to employ our minds upon during our waking hours at night.

Standing near the door, we dipped our fingers in the holy water, crossed and blessed ourselves, and proceeded up to the sleeping-room in the usual order, two by two. When we had got into bed, we repeated a prayer beginning with,—

"Mon Dieu, je vous donne mon cœur,"—
"My God, I give you my heart;"

and then an old nun, bringing some holy water, sprinkled it on our beds to drive away the devil, while we took some and crossed ourselves again.

At nine o'clock the bell rang, and all who were awake repeated a prayer, called the offrande; those who were asleep were considered as excused.

After my admission among the nuns, I had more opportunity than before to observe the conduct of mad Jane Ray. She behaved quite differently from the rest, and with a degree of levity irreconcilable with the rules. She was, as I have described her, a large woman, with nothing beautiful or attractive in her face, form, or manners; careless in her dress, and of a restless disposition, which prevented her from applying herself to anything for any length of time, and kept her roving about, and almost perpetually talking to somebody or other. It would be very difficult to give an accurate description of this singular woman; dressed in the plain garments of the nuns, bound by the same vows, and accustomed to the same life, resembling them in nothing else, and frequently interrupting all their employments. She was apparently almost always studying, or pursuing some odd fancy; now rising from sewing to walk up and down, or straying in from another apartment, looking about, addressing some of us, and passing out again, or saying something to make us laugh. But what showed she was no novelty, was the little attention paid to her, and the levity with which she was treated by the whole nuns; even the Superior every day passed over irregularities in this singular person, which she would have punished with penances, or at least have met with reprimands, in any other. From what I saw of her I soon perceived that she betrayed two distinct traits of character; a kind disposition towards such as she chose to prefer, and a pleasure in teasing those she disliked, or such as had offended her.

CHAPTER VIII.

Description of apartments in the Black Nunnery, in order: 1st Floor—2nd Floor—Garret—The Founder—Superior's management with the friends of Novices—Religious lies—Criminality of concealing sins at confession.

I WILL now give from memory a general description of the interior of the Convent of Black Nuns, except the few apartments which I never saw. I may be inaccurate in some things, as the apartments and passages of that spacious building are numerous and various; but I am willing to risk my credit for truth and sincerity on the general correspondence between my description and things as they are. And this would, perhaps, be as good a case as any by which to test the truth of my statements, were it possible to obtain access to the interior. It is well known, that none but veiled nuns, the bishop and priests, are ever admitted: and, of course, that I cannot have seen what I profess to describe, if I have not been a black nun. The priests who read this book will acknowledge to themselves the truth of my description; but will, of course, deny it to the world, and probably exert themselves to destroy my credit. I offer to every reader the following description, knowing that time may possibly throw open those sacred recesses, and allow the entrance of those who can satisfy themselves, with their own eyes, of its truth. Some of my declarations may be thought deficient in evidence, and this they must of necessity be in the present state of things. But here is a kind of evidence, on which I rely, as I see how unquestionable and satisfactory it must prove, whenever it shall be obtained.

If the interior of the Black Nunnery, whenever it shall be examined, is materially different from the following description, then I shall claim no confidence, of my readers. If it resemble it, they will, I persume, place confidence in some of these declarations, on which I may never be corroborated by true and living witnesses.

I am sensible that great changes may be made in the furniture of apartments; that new walls may be constructed, or old ones removed; and I have been incredibly informed, that masons have been employed in the Nunnery since I left it. I well know, however, that entire changes cannot be made, and that enough must remain as it was to substantiate my description, whenever the truth shall be known.

The First Story.

Beginning at the extremity of the western wing of the Convent towards Notre Dame street, on the first story, there is—

1st. The Nuns' private chapel adjoining which is a passage to a small projection of the building extending from the upper story to the ground, with very small windows. Into the passage we were sometimes required to bring wood from the yard, and pile it up for use.

2nd. A large community-room, with plain benches fixed against the wall to sit, and lower ones in front to place our feet upon. There is a fountain in the passage near the chimney at the further end, for washing the hands and face, with a green curtain sliding on a rod before it. This passage leads to the old nuns' sleeping-room on the right, and the Superior's sleeping-room just beyond it, as well as to a stair-case which conducts to the nuns' sleeping-room, or dormitoire above. At the end of the passage is a door opening into—

3rd. The dining-room; this is larger than the community-room, and has three long tables for eating, and a chapelle, or collection of little pictures, a crucifix, and a small image of the infant Saviour in a glass case. This apartment has four doors, by the first of which we are supposed to have entered, while one opens to a pantry, and the third and fourth to the two next apartments.

4th. A large community-room, with tables for sewing, and a stair-case on the opposite left-hand corner.

5th. A community-room for prayer used by both nuns and novices. In the further right-hand corner is a small room, partitioned off, called the room for examination of conscience, which I had visited while a novice by permission of the Superior, and where nuns and novices occasionally resorted to reflect on their character, usually in preparation for the sacrament, or when they had transgressed some of their rules. This little room was hardly large enough to contain half a dozen persons at a time.

6th. Next, beyond, is a large community-room for Sundays. A door leads to the yard, and thence to a gate in the wall on the cross street.

7th. Adjoining this is a sitting room, fronting on the cross street, with two windows, and a store room on the side opposite them. There is but little furniture, and that very plain.

8th. From this room a door leads into what I may call the wax-room, as it contains many figures in wax, not intended for sale. There we sometimes used to pray, or meditate on the Saviour's passion. This room projects from the main building; leaving it, you enter a long passage, with cupboards on the right, in which are stored crockery-ware, knives and forks, and other articles of table furniture, to replace those worn out or broken—all of the plainest description; also, shovels, tongs, &c. This passage leads to—

9th. A corner room, with a few benches, &c., and a door leading to a gate in the street. Here some of the medicines were kept, and persons were often admitted on business, or to obtain medicines with tickets from the priests; and waited till the Superior or an old nun could be sent for. Beyond this room we never were allowed to go; and I cannot speak from personal knowledge of what came next.

The Second Story.

Beginning, as before, at the western extremity of the north wing, but on the second story, the furthest apartment in that direction which I ever entered was,—

1st. The nuns' sleeping-room, or dormitoire, which I have already described. Here is an access to the projection mentioned in speaking of the first story. The stairs by which we came up to bed are at the further end of the room; and near them a crucifix and font of holy water. A door at the end of the room opens into a passage, with two small rooms, and closets between them, containing bed-clothes. Next you enter,—

2nd. A small community-room, beyond which is a passage with a narrow staircase, seldom used, which leads into the fourth community-room, in the fourth story. Following the passage just mentioned, you enter by a door,—

3rd. A little sitting-room, furnished in the following manner:—with chairs, a sofa on the north side, covered with a red-figured cover and fringe; a table in the middle, commonly bearing one or two books, an inkstand, pen, &c. At one corner is a little projection into the room, caused by a staircase leading from above to the floor below, without any communication with the second story. This room has a door opening upon a staircase leading down to the yard, on the opposite side of which is a gate opening into the cross street. By this way the physician is admitted, except when he comes later than usual. When he comes in, he usually sits a little while, until a nun goes into the adjoining nuns' sick-room, to see if all is ready, and returns to admit him. After prescribing for the patients, he goes no further, but returns by the way he enters; and these are the only rooms into which he is ever admitted.

4th. The nuns' sick-room adjoins the little sitting-room on the east, and has, I think, four windows towards the north, with beds ranged in two rows from end to end, and a few more between them, near the opposite extremity. The door to the sitting-room swings to the left, and behind it is a table, while a glass case on the right contains a wax figure of the infant Saviour, with several sheep. Near the north-eastern corner of this room are two doors, one of which opens into a long and narrow passage, leading to the head of the great staircase that conducts to the cross street. By this passage the physician sometimes finds his way to the sick-room, when he comes later than usual. He rings the bell at the gate, which I was told had a concealed pull, known only to him and the priests, proceeds up stairs and through the passage, rapping three times at the door of the sick-room, which is opened by a nun in attendance, after she has given one rap in reply. When he has visited his patients and prescribed for them, he returns by the same way.

5th. Next beyond the sick-room, is a large unoccupied apartment, half divided by two partial partitions, which leave an open space in the middle. Here some of the old nuns commonly meet in the day time.

6th. A door from this apartment opens into another, not appropriated to any peculiar use, but containing a table, where medicines are sometimes prepared by an old nun, who is usually found there. Passing through this room, you enter a passage, with doors on its four sides; that on the left, which is kept fastened on the inside, leads to the staircase and gate; and that in front to the private sick-rooms, soon to be described.

7th. That on the right leads to another, appropriated to nuns suffering with the most loathsome disease. There was usually a number of straw mattresses in that room, as I well know, having helped to carry them in, after the yard-man had filled them. A door beyond enters into a store-room, which extends also beyond this apartment. On the right, another door opens into another passage, crossing which, you enter by a door.

8th. A room with bed and screen in one corner, on which nuns were laid to be examined, before their introduction into the sick-room last mentioned. Another door, opposite the former, opens into a passage, in which is a staircase leading down.

9th. Beyond this is a spare room, sometimes used to store apples, boxes of different things, &c.

10th. Returning now to the passage which opens on one side upon the stairs to the gate, we enter the only remaining door, which leads into an apartment usually occupied by some of the old nuns, and frequently by the Superior.

11th and 12th. Beyond this are two more sick-rooms, in one of which those nuns stay who are waiting their accouchment, and in the other those who have passed it.

13th. The next is a small sitting-room, where a priest waits to baptize the infants previous to their murder. A passage leads from this room on the left, by the doors of two succeeding apartments, neither of which have I ever entered.

14th. The first of them is the "holy retreat," or room occupied by the priests, while suffering the penalty of their licentiousness.

15th. The other is a sitting-room, to which they have access. Beyond these, the passage leads to two rooms, containing closets for the storage of various articles; and two others, where persons are received who come on business.

The public hospitals succeed, and extend a considerable distance—I believe, to the extremity of the building. By a public entrance in that part, priests often come into the Nunnery; and I have often seen some of them thereabouts, who must have entered that way. Indeed, priests often get into the "holy retreat." without exposing themselves in the view of persons in the other parts of the Convent, and have been first known to be there, by the yard-nuns being sent to the Seminary for their clothes.

The Congregational Nunnery was founded by a nun, called Sister Bourgeoise. She taught a school in Montreal, and left property for the foundation of a Convent. Her body is buried, and her heart is kept under the Nunnery in an iron chest, which has been shown to me, with the assurance that it continues in perfect preservation, although she has been dead more than one hundred and fifty years. In the chapel is the following inscription: "Sœur Bourgeoise, Iondatrice du Convent." (Sister Bourgeoise, Founder of the Convent.)

Nothing was more common than for the Superior to step hastily into our community-room, while numbers of us were assembled there, and hastily communicate her wishes in words like these:—

"Here are the parents of such a novice; come with me, and bear me out in this story." She would then mention the outlines of a tissue of falsehoods she had just invented, that we might be prepared to fabricate circumstances, and throw in whatever else might favour the deception. This was justified and indeed most highly commanded, by the system of faith by which we are instructed.

It was a common remark always at the initiation of a new nun into the Black nun department, that is, to receive the black veil, that the introduction of another novice into the convent as a veiled nun, always caused the introduction of a veiled nun into heaven as a saint, which was on account of the singular disappearance of some of the older nuns always at the entrance of new ones.

To witness the scenes which often occurred between us and strangers would have struck a person most powerfully, if he had known how truth was set at nought. The Superior, with a serious and dignified air, and a pleasant voice and aspect, would commence a recital of things most favourable to the character of the absent novice, representing her equally fond of her situation, and beloved by the other inmates. The tale told by the Superior, whatever it was, however unheard before might have been any of her statements, was then attested by us, who in every way we could think of, endeavoured to confirm her declarations beyond the reach of doubt.

Sometimes the Superior would entrust the management of such a case to some of the nuns, whether to habituate us to the practice in which she was so highly accomplished, or to relieve herself of what would have been a serious burden to most other persons, or to ascertain whether she could depend upon us, or all together, I cannot tell. Often, however, have I seen her throw open a door, and say, in a hurried manner, "Who can tell the best story?"

One point, on which we have received frequent and particular instructions was, the nature of falsehoods. On this subject I have heard many a speech, I had almost said many a sermon; and I was led to believe that it was one of great importance, one on which it was a duty to be well informed, as well as to act. "What!" exclaimed a priest one day—"what, a nun of your age, and not know the difference between a wicked and a religious lie!"

He then went on, as had been done many times previously in my hearing, to show the essential difference between the two different kinds of falsehoods. A lie told merely for the injury of another, for our own interest alone, or for no object at all, he painted as a sin worthy of penance.—But a lie told for the good of the church or convent, was meritorious, and of course the telling of it a duty. And of this class of lies there were many varieties and shades. This doctrine has been inculcated on me and my companions in the nunnery, more times than I can enumerate; and to say that it was generally received, would be to tell part of the truth. We often saw the practice of it, and were frequently made to take part in it. Whenever anything which the Superior thought important, could be most conveniently accomplished by falsehood, she resorted to it without scruple.

There was a class of cases, in which she more frequently relied on deception than any other.

The friends of novices frequently applied at the Convent to see them, or at least to inquire after their welfare. It was common for them to be politely refused an interview, on some account or other, generally a mere pretext; and then the Superior generally sought to make as favourable an impression as possible on the visitors. Sometimes she would make up a story on the spot, and tell the strangers; requiring some of us to confirm it in the most convincing way we could.

At other times she would prefer to make over to us the task of deceiving, and we were commended in proportion to our ingenuity and success.

Some nun usually showed her submission, by immediately stepping forward. She would then add, perhaps, that the parents of such a novice, whom she named, were in waiting, and it was necessary that they should be told such and such things. To perform so difficult a task well, was considered a difficult duty, and it was one of the most certain ways to gain the favour of the Superior. Whoever volunteered to make a story on the spot, was sent immediately to tell it, and the other nuns present were hurried off with her under strict injunctions to uphold her in everything she might state. The Superior, as there was every reason to believe, on all such occasions, when she did not herself appear, hastened to the apartment adjoining that in which the nuns were going, there to listen through the thin partition, to hear whether all performed their parts aright. It was not uncommon for her to go rather further, when she wanted to give such explanations as she could have desired. She would then enter abruptly, and ask, "Who can tell a good story this morning?" and hurry us off without a moment's delay, to do our best at a venture, without waiting for instructions. It would be curious, could a stranger from the "wicked world" outside the Convent, witness such a scene. One of the nuns, who felt in a favourable humour to undertake the proposed task, would step promptly forward, and signify her readiness in the usual way, by a knowing wink of one eye, and a slight toss of the head.

"Well, go and do the best you can," the Superior would say: "and all the rest of you mind and swear to it." The latter part of the order, at least, was always performed; for in every case, all the nuns present appeared as unanimous witnesses of everything that was uttered by the spokeswoman of the day.

We were constantly hearing it repeated, that we must never again look upon ourselves as our own; but must remember, that we were solely and irrevocably devoted to God. Whatever was required of us, we were called upon to yield under the most solemn considerations. I cannot speak on every particular with equal freedom: but I wish my readers clearly to understand the condition in which we were placed, and the means used to reduce us to what we had to submit to. Not only were we required to perform the several tasks imposed upon us at work, prayers, and penances, under the idea that we were performing solemn duties to our Maker, but everything else which was required of us, we were constantly told, was something indispensable in his sight. The priests, we admitted, were the servants of God, especially appointed by his authority, to teach us our duty, to absolve us from sin, and lead us to heaven. Without their assistance, we had allowed we could never enjoy the favour of God; unless they administered the sacrament to us, we could not enjoy everlasting happiness. Having consented to acknowledge all this, we had no objection to urge against admitting any other demand that might be made for or by them. If we thought an act ever so criminal, the Superior would tell us that the priests acted under the direct sanction of God, and *could not sin.* Of course, then, it could not be wrong to comply with any of their requests, because they could not demand anything but what was right. On the contrary, to refuse to do anything they asked would necessarily be sinful. Such doctrines admitted, and such practices performed, it will not seem wonderful when I mention that we often felt something of their preposterous character.

Sometimes we took pleasure in ridiculing some of the favourite themes of our teachers; and I recollect one subject particularly, which at one period afforded us repeated merriment. It may seem irreverent in me to give the account, but I do it to show how things of a solemn nature were sometimes treated in the convent, by women bearing the title of saints. A Canadian novice, who spoke very broken English, one day remarked that she was performing some duty "for the God." This peculiar expression had something ridiculous to the ears of some of us; and it was soon repeated again and again, in application to various ceremonies which we had to perform. Mad Jane Ray seized upon it with avidity, and with her aid it soon took the place of a by-word in conversation, so that we were constantly reminding each other that we were doing this thing and that thing, how trifling and unmeaning soever, "for the God." Nor did we stop here; when the Superior called upon us to bear witness to one of her religious lies, or to fabricate the most spurious one the time would admit; to save her the trouble, we were sure to be reminded, on our way to the stranger's room, that we were doing it "for the God." And so it was when other things were mentioned—everything which belonged to our condition was spoken of in somewhat similar terms.

I have hardly detained the reader long enough on this subject to give him a just impression of the stress laid on confession. It is one of the great points to which our attention was constantly directed. We were directed to keep a strict and constant watch over our thoughts; to have continually before our minds the rules of the convent, to compare the one with the other, remember every devotion, and tell all, even the smallest, at confession, either to the Superior or to the priest. My mind was thus kept in a continual state of activity, which proved very wearisome; and it required the constant exertion of our teachers to keep us up to the practice they inculcated.

Another tale recurs to me, of those which were frequently told us, to make us feel the importance of unreserved confession.

LIBRA

A nun of our convent, who had hidden some sin from her confessor, died suddenly, and without any one to confess her. Her sisters assembled to pray for the peace of her soul, when she appeared, and informed them that it would be of no use, but rather troublesome to her, as her pardon was impossible. The doctrine is, that prayers made for souls guilty of unconfessed sin, do but sink them deeper in hell; and this is the reason I have heard given for not praying for Protestants.

The authority of the priests in everything, and the enormity of every act which opposes it, were also impressed upon our minds, in various ways, by our teachers. A "Father" told us the following story one day at catechism.

A man once died who had failed to pay some money which the priest had asked of him; he was condemned to be burnt in purgatory until he should pay it, but had permission to come back to this world, and take a human body to work in. He made his appearance, therefore, again on earth, and hired himself to a rich man as a labourer. He worked all day, with the fire working in him, unseen by other people; but while he was in bed that night, a girl in an adjoining room, perceiving the smell of brimstone, looked through a crack in the wall, and saw him covered with flames. She informed his master, who questioned him the next morning, and found that his hired man was secretly suffering the pains of purgatory, for neglecting to pay a certain sum of money to the priest. He, therefore, furnished him with the amount due; it was paid, and the servant went off immediately to heaven. The priest cannot forgive any debt due unto him, because it is the Lord's estate.

While at confession, I was urged to hide nothing from the priests, and have been told by them, that they already knew what was in my heart, but would not tell, because it was necessary for me to confess it. I really believed that the priests were acquainted with my thoughts; and often stood in awe of them. They often told me, they had power to strike me dead at any moment.

CHAPTER IX.

Nuns with similar names—Squaw nuns—First visit to the cellar—Description of it—Shocking discovery there—Superior's instructions—Private signal of the priests—Books used in the Nunnery—Opinions expressed of the Bible—Specimens of what I know of the Scriptures.

I FOUND that I had several namesakes among the nuns, for there were two others who had already borne away my new name, Saint Eustace. This was not a solitary case, for there were five Saint Marys, and three Saint Monros, besides two novices of that name. Of my namesakes, I have little to say, for they resembled most nuns; being so much cut off from intercourse with me and other sisters, that I never saw anything in them, nor learnt anything about them, worth mentioning.

Several of my new companions were squaws, who had taken the veil at different times. They were from some of the Indian settlements in the country, but were not distinguishable by any striking habits of character from other nuns, and were generally not very different in their appearance when in their usual dress, and engaged in their customary occupations. It was evident they were treated with much kindness and lenity by the Superior and the old nuns; and this I discovered was done in order to render them as well contented and happy in their situations as possible: and should have attributed the motives for this partiality to their wishing, that they might not influence others to keep away, had I not known they were, like ourselves, unable to exert such an influence. And therefore, I could not satisfy my own mind why this difference was made. Many of the Indians were remarkably devoted to the priests, believing everything they were taught; and as it is represented to be not only a high honour, but a real advantage to a family, to have one of its members become a nun, Indian parents will often pay large sums of money for the admission of their daughters into a convent. The father of one of the squaws, I was told, paid to the Superior nearly her weight in silver on her reception, although he was obliged to sell nearly all his property to raise the money. This he did voluntarily, because he thought himself overpaid by having the advantage of her prayers, self-sacrifices, &c., for himself and the remainder of his family. The squaws sometimes served to amuse us; for when we were partially dispirited or gloomy, the Superior would occasionally send them to dress themselves in their Indian garments, which usually excited us to merriment.

Among the squaw nuns whom I particularly remember, was one of the Saint Hypolites, not the one who figured in a dreadful scene, described in another part of this narrative, but a woman of a far more mild and humane character.

Three or four days after my reception, the Superior sent me into the cellar for coals; and after she had given me directions, I proceeded down a staircase with a lamp in my hand. I soon found myself on the bare earth in a spacious place, so dark that I could not at once distinguish its form or size, but I observed that it had very solid stone walls, and was arched overhead, at no great elevation. Following my directions, I proceeded onwards from the foot of the stairs, where appeared to be one end of the cellar. After walking about fifteen paces, I passed three small doors, on the right, fastened with large iron bolts on the outside, pushed into posts of stone work, and each having a small opening above, covered with a fine grating, secured by a smaller bolt. On my left were three similar doors, resembling these, and placed opposite them.

Beyond these, the space became broader; the doors evidently closed small compartments, projecting from the outer wall of the cellar. I soon stepped upon a wooden floor, on which were heaps of wool, coarse linen, and other articles, apparently deposited there for occasional use. I soon crossed the floor, and found the bare earth again under my feet.

A little further on, I found the cellar again contracted in size by a row of closets, or smaller compartments, projecting on each side. These were closed by doors of a different description from the first, having a simple fastening, and no opening through them.

Just beyond, on the left side, I passed a staircase leading up, and then three doors, much resembling those first described, standing opposite three more, on the other side of the cellar. Having passed these, I found the cellar enlarged as before, and here the earth appeared as if mixed with some whitish substance, which attracted my attention.

As I proceeded, I found the whiteness increase, until the surface looked almost like snow, and in a short time I observed before me, a hole dug so deep into the earth that I could perceive no bottom. I stopped to observe it—it was circular, twelve or perhaps fifteen feet across, in the middle of the cellar, and unprotected by any kind of curb, so that one might easily have walked into it in the dark.

The white substance which I have observed, was spread all over the surface around it; and lay in the quantities on all sides, that it seemed as if a great deal of it must have been thrown into the hole. It immediately occurred to me that the white substance was lime, and that was the place where the infants were buried, after being murdered, as the Superior had informed me. I knew that lime is often used by Roman Catholics in burying places; and in that way I accounted for its being scattered about the spot in such quantities.

This was a shocking thought to me; but I can hardly tell how it affected me, as I had already been prepared to expect dreadful things in the Convent, and had undergone trials which prevented me from feeling as I should formerly have done in similar circumstances.

I passed the spot, therefore, with dreadful thoughts, it is true, about the little corpses which might be in that secret burying place, but with recollections also of the declarations which I had heard, about the favour done their souls in sending them direct to heaven, and the necessary virtue accompanying all the actions of the priests.

Whether I noticed them or not at the time, there is a window or two on each side nearly against the hole, in at which are sometimes thrown articles brought to them from without, for the use of the Convent. Through the window on my right, which opens into the yard, towards the cross street, lime is received from carts; I then saw a large heap of it near the place.

Passing the hole, I came to a spot where was another projection on each side, with three cells like those I first described. Beyond them, in another broad part of the cellar, were heaps of vegetables, and other things, on the right; and on the left, I found the charcoal I was in search of. This was placed in a heap against the wall, as I might then have observed, near a small high window, like the rest, at which it is thrown in. Beyond this spot, at a distance, the cellar terminated.

The top, quite to that point, is arched overhead, though at different heights, for the earth on the bottom is uneven, and in some places several feet higher than in others.

Not liking to be alone in so spacious and gloomy a part of the Convent, especially after the discovery I had made, I hastened to fill my basket with coal, and to return.

Here then I was in a place which I had considered as the nearest imitation of heaven to be found on earth, amongst a society where deeds were constantly perpetrated, which I had believed to be most criminal, and had now found the place in which harmless infants were unfeelingly thrown out of sight, after being murdered.

And yet, such is the power of instruction and example, although not satisfied, as many around me seemed to be, that this was all righteous and proper, I sometimes was half inclined to believe it, for the priests could do no sin, and this was done by priests.

Among the first instructions I received from the Superior, were such as prepared me to admit priests into the nunnery, from the street, at irregular hours. It is no secret that priests enter and go out; but if they were to be watched by any person in St. Paul's street all day long, no irregularity might be suspected; and they might be supposed to visit the Convent for the performance of religious ceremonies merely.

But if a person were near the gate about midnight, he might sometimes form a different opinion; for when a stray priest is shut out of the Seminary, or is otherwise put in the need of seeking a lodging, he is always sure of being admitted into the Black Nunnery. Nobody but a priest can ever ring the bell at the sick-room door; much less can any but a priest gain admittance. The pull of the bell is entirely concealed, somewhere on the outside of the gate, I have been told.

He makes himself known as a priest by a peculiar kind of hissing sound, made by the tongue against the teeth while they are kept closed and the lips open. The nun within, who delays to open the door until informed what kind of an applicant is there, immediately recognizes the signal, and replies with two inarticulate sounds, such as are often used instead of yes, with the mouth closed.

The Superior seemed to consider this part of my instructions quite important, and taught me the signals. I had often occasion to use them; I have been repeatedly called to the door, in the night, while watching in the sick-room; and on reaching it, heard the short hissing sound I have mentioned; then, according to my standing orders, unfastened the door, admitted a priest, who was at liberty to go where he pleased. I will name M. Bierze, from St. Denis.

The books used in the nunnery, at least such as I recollect of them, were the following. Most of these are lecture books, or such as are used by the daily readers, while we were at work and meals. These were all furnished by the Superior, out of her library, to which we never had access. She was informed when we had done with the book, and then exchanged it for another, as she pleased to select.

La Miroir du Chrétien (Christian Mirror,) History of Rome, History of the Church, Life of Sœur Bourgeoise, (the founder of the Convent,) in two volumes, L'Ange Conducteur, (the Guardian Angel,) L'Ange Chrétien, (the Christian Angel,) Les Vies des Saints, (Lives of the Saints,) in several volumes, Dialogues, a volume consisting of conversations between a Protestant Doctor, called Dr. D., and a Catholic gentleman, on the articles of faith, in which, after much ingenious reasoning, the former was confuted; one large book, the name of which I have forgotten, occupied us nine or ten months at our lectures, night and morning, L'Instruction de la Jeunesse, (the Instruction of Youth,) containing much about Convents, and the education of persons in the world, with a great deal on confessions, &c. Examen de la Conscience (Examination of Conscience,) is a book frequently used.

I may here remark, that I never saw a Bible in the Convent from the day I entered as a novice, until that on which I effected my escape. The Catholic New Testament, commonly called the Evangile, was read to us about three or four times a year. The Superior directed the reader what passage to select; but we never had it in our hands to read when we pleased. I often heard the Protestant Bible spoken of, in bitter terms, as a most dangerous book, and one which never ought to be in the hands of common people.

CHAPTER X.

Manufacture of bread and wax candles, carried on in the Convent—Superstitions—Scapularies—Virgin Mary's Pincushion—Her House—The Bishop's power over fire—My instructions to Novices—Jane Ray—Vacillation of feelings.

LARGE quantities of bread are made in the Black Nunnery every week; for, besides what is necessary to feed the nuns, many of the poor are supplied. When a priest wishes to give a loaf of bread to a poor person, he gives him an order, which is presented at the Convent. The making of bread is, therefore, one of the most laborious employments in the institution.

The manufacture of wax candles was another important branch of business in the nunnery. It was carried on in a small room, on the first floor, thence called the ciergerie, or wax room, cierge being the French word for wax. I was sometimes sent to read the daily lecture and catechism to the nuns employed there, but found it a very unpleasant task, as the smell rising from the melted wax gave me a sickness at the stomach. The employment was considered as rather unhealthy, and those were assigned to it who had the strongest constitutions. The nuns who were more employed in that room were Saint Maria, Saint Catherine, Saint Charlotte, Saint Hyacinthe, Saint Hypolite, and others. But with these, as with other persons in the Convent, I was never allowed to speak, except under circumstances before mentioned. I was sent to read, and was not allowed even to answer the most trivial question, if one were asked me. Should a nun say, "What o'clock is it?" I never should have dared to reply, but was required to report her to the Superior.

Much stress was laid on the *sainte scapulaire*, or holy scapulary. This is a small band of cloth or silk, formed and wrought in a particular manner, to be tied around the neck, by two strings, fastened to the ends. I have made many of them; having been sometimes set to make them in the Convent. On one side is worked a kind of double cross, (thus, X X,) and on the other, I. H. S., the meaning of which I do not exactly know. Such a band is called a scapulary, and many miracles are attributed to its power. Children on first receiving the communion are often presented with scapularies, which they are taught to regard with great reverence. We were told of the wonders effected by their means, in the addresses that were made to us, by priests, at catechism or lectures. I will repeat one or two of the stories which occur to me.

A Roman Catholic servant woman, who had concealed some of her sins at confession, acted so hypocritical a part as to make her mistress believe her a *devotee*, or strict observer of her duty. She even imposed upon her confessor to such a degree that he gave her a scapulary. After he had given it, however, one of the saints in heaven informed him in a vision, that the holy scapulary must not remain on the neck of so great a sinner, and that it must be restored to the church. She lay down that night with the scapulary round her throat; but in the morning was found dead, with her head cut off, and the scapulary was discovered in the church. The belief was, that the devil could not endure to have so holy a thing on one of his servants, and had pulled so hard to get it off, as to draw the silken thread, with which it was tied, through her neck; after which, by some divine power, it was restored to the church.

Another story was as follows. A poor Roman Catholic was once taken prisoner by the heretics. He had a *sainte scapulaire* on his neck, when God, seeing him in the midst of his foes, took it from the neck by a miracle, and held it up in the air above the throng of heretics; more than one hundred of whom were converted, by seeing it thus supernaturally suspended.

I had been informed by the Superior, on my first admission as a nun, that there was a subterraneous passage, leading from the cellar of our Convent, into that of the Congregational Nunnery: but, though I had so often visited the cellar, I had never seen it. One day, after I had been received three or four months, I was sent to walk through it on my knees, with another nun, as a penance. This, and other penances, were sometimes put upon us by the priests, without any reason assigned. The common way, indeed, was to tell us of the sin for which a penance was imposed, but we were left many times to conjecture. Now and then the priest would inform us at a subsequent confession, when he happened to recollect something about it, as I thought, and not because he reflected or cared much upon the subject.

The nun who was with me led through the cellar, passing to the right of the secret burial-place, and showed me the door of the subterraneous passage, which was at the extremity towards the Congregational Nunnery. The reasons why I had not noticed it before, I presume, were, that it was made to shut close and even with the wall: and all that part of the cellar was whitewashed. The door, which is of wood, and square, opens with a latch into a passage about four feet and a half high. We immediately got upon our knees, commenced saying the prayers required, and began to move slowly along the dark and narrow passage. It may be fifty or sixty feet in length. When we reached the end, we opened a door, and found ourselves in the cellar of the Congregational Nunnery, at some distance from the outer wall; for the covered way is carried on towards the middle of the cellar by two low partitions covered at the top. By the side of the door was placed a list of names of the Black Nuns, with a slide that might be drawn over any of them. We covered our names in this manner, as evidence of having performed the duty assigned us; and then returned downwards on our knees, by the way we had come. This penance I repeatedly performed afterwards; and by this way, as I have occasion elsewhere to mention, nuns from the Congregational Nunnery sometimes entered our Convent for worse purposes.

We were frequently assured that miracles are still performed; and pains were taken to impress us deeply on this subject.* The Superior often spoke to us of the Virgin Mary's pincushion, the remains of which are pretended to be preserved in the Convent, though it has crumbled quite to dust. We regarded this relic with such veneration, that we were afraid even to look at it, and we often heard the following story related, when the subject was introduced.

A priest in Jerusalem once had a vision, in which he was informed that the house in which the Virgin had lived, should be removed from its foundations, and transported to a distance. He did not think the communication was from God, and therefore disregarded it; but the house was soon after missed, which convinced him that the vision was true, and he told where the house might be found. A picture of the house is preserved in the Nunnery, and was sometimes shown us. There was also wax figures of Joseph sawing wood, and Jesus, as a child, picking up the chips. We were taught to sing a little song relating to this, the chorus of which I remember:

"Saint Joseph Carpentier,
Petit Jesus ramassait les copeaux
Pour faire bouillir la marmite!"

(St. Joseph was a carpenter, little Jesus collected chips to make the pot boil.)

I began to speak of miracles, and I recollect a story of one, about a family in Italy saved from shipwreck by a priest, who were in consequence converted, and had two sons honoured with the priest's office.

I had heard, before I entered the Convent, about a great fire which had destroyed a number of houses in the Quebec suburbs, and which some said the Bishop extinguished with holy water. I once heard a Catholic and a Protestant disputing on this subject, and when I went to the Congregational Nunnery, I sometimes heard the children, alluding to the same story, say, at an alarm of fire, "Is it a Catholic fire? Then why does not the Bishop run?"

Among the topics on which the Bishop addressed the nuns in the Convent, this was one. He told us the story one day, that he could have sooner interfered and stopped the flames, but that at last, finding they were about to destroy too many Catholic houses, he threw holy water on the fire, and extinguished it. I believed this, and also thought that he was able to put out any fire, but that he never did it except when inspired.

The holy water which the Bishop has consecrated, was considered much more efficacious than any blessed by a common priest; and this it was which was used in the Convent in sprinkling our beds. It has a virtue in it, to keep off any evil spirit.

Now that I was a nun, I was occasionally sent to read lectures to the novices, as other nuns had been while I was a novice. There were but few of us who were thought capable of reading English well enough, and, therefore, I was more frequently sent than I might otherwise have been. The Superior often said to me, as I was going among the novices:

"Try to convert them—save their souls—you know you will have a higher place in heaven for every one you convert."

For whatever reason, Mad Jane Ray seemed to take great delight in crossing and provoking the Superior and old nuns; and often she would cause an interruption when it was most inconvenient and displeasing to them. The preservation of silence was insisted upon most rigidly, and penances of such a nature were imposed for breaking it, that it was a constant source of uneasiness with me, to know that I might infringe the rules in so many ways, and that inattention might at any moment subject me to something very unpleasant. During the periods of meditation, therefore, and those of lecture, work, and repose, I kept a strict guard upon myself, to escape penances, as well as to avoid sin; and the silence of the others convinced me that they were equally watchful, and from the same motives.

My feelings, however, varied at different times, and so did those of many, if not of all my companions, excepting the older ones, who took their turns in watching us. We sometimes felt disposed for gaiety, and threw off all idea that talking was sinful, even when required by the rules of the Convent. I even, when I felt that I might perhaps be doing wrong, reflected that confession, and certainly penance, would soon wipe off the guilt.

I may remark here, that I ere long found out several things important to be known to a person living under such rules. One of these was, that it was much better to confess to a priest a sin committed against the rules, because he would not require one of the penances I most disliked, viz., those which exposed me to the observation of the nuns, or which demanded self-debasement before them, like begging their pardon, kissing the floor, or the Superior's feet, &c., and, besides, he as a confessor was bound to secrecy, and could not inform the Superior against me. My conscience being as effectually unburdened by my confession to the priest, as I had been taught to believe, I therefore preferred not to tell my sins to any one else: and this course I found was preferred by others for the same good reasons.

To Jane Ray, however, it sometimes appeared to be a matter of perfect indifference, who knew her violations of rule, to what penance she exposed herself.

Often and often, while perfect silence prevailed among the nuns, at meditation, or while nothing was to be heard except the voice of the reader appointed for the day, no matter whose life or writings were presented for our contemplation, Jane would break forth with some remark or question, that would attract general attention, and often cause a long and total interruption. Sometimes she would make some harmless remark or inquiry aloud, as if through mere inadvertency, and then her loud and well known voice, so strongly associated with every thing singular and ridiculous, would arrest the attention of us all, and generally incline us to laugh. The Superior would then usually utter some hasty remonstrance, and many a time I have heard her pronounce some penance upon her; but Jane had some apology ready, or some reply calculated to irritate still further, or to prove to every one that no punishment would be effectual on her. Sometimes this singular woman would appear to be actuated by opposite feelings and motives; for although she usually delighted in drawing others into difficulty, and has thrown many a severe penance even upon her greatest favourites, on other occasions she appeared totally regardless of consequences herself, and preferred to take all the blame, anxious only to shield others.

I have repeatedly known her to break silence in the community, as if she had no object, or none beyond that of causing disturbance, or exciting a smile, and as soon as it was noticed, exclaim, "Say it's me, say it's me!"

Sometimes she would even expose herself to punishment in place of another who was guilty; and thus I found it difficult fully to understand her. In some cases she seemed decidedly out of her wits, as the Superior and priests commonly preferred to represent her; but generally I saw in her what prevented me from accounting her insane.

Among her common tricks were such as these; she gave me the name of the "Devout English Reader," because I was often appointed to read the lecture to the English girls; and sometimes, after taking a seat near me, under pretence of deafness, would whisper it in my hearing, because she knew my want of self-command when excited to laughter. Thus she often exposed me to penances for a breach of decorum, and set me to biting my lips, to avoid laughing outright in the midst of a solemn lecture. "Oh! you devout English reader!" would sometimes come upon me suddenly from her lips, with something in it so ludicrous, that I had to exert myself to the utmost to avoid observation.

This came so often at one time, that I grew uneasy, and told her I must confess it, to unburden my conscience. I had not done so before, because she would complain of me, for giving way to temptation.

Sometimes she would pass behind us as we stood at dinner ready to sit down, and softly moving back our chairs, leave us to fall down upon the floor. This she has repeatedly done; and while we were laughing together, she would spring forward, kneel to the Superior, and beg her pardon and a penance.

CHAPTER XI.

Alarming order from the Superior—Proceed to execute it—Scene in an upper room—Sentence of death, and murder—My own distress—Reports made to friends of St. Frances.

But I must now come to one deed in which I had some part, and which I look back upon with greater horror and pain than any occurrences in the Convent, in which I was not the principal sufferer. It is not necessary for me to attempt to excuse myself in this or any other case. Those who have any disposition to judge fairly, will exercise their own judgment in making allowances for me, under the fear and force, the command and examples, before me. I, therefore, shall confine myself, as usual, to the simple narration of facts. The time was about five months after I took the veil, the weather was cool, perhaps in September or October. One day, the Superior sent for me and several other nuns, to receive her commands at a particular room. We found the Bishop and some priests with her; and speaking in an unusual tone of fierceness and authority, she said, "Go to the room for the Examination of Conscience, and drag St. Frances up stairs." Nothing more was necessary than this unusual command, with the tone and manner which accompanied it, to excite in me the most gloomy anticipations. It did not strike me as strange that St. Frances should be in the room to which the Superior directed us. It was an apartment to which we were often sent to prepare for the communion, and to which we voluntarily went, whenever we felt the compunctions which our ignorance of duty, and the misinstructions we received, inclined us to seek relief from self-reproach. Indeed I had seen her there a little before. What terrified me was, first, the Superior's angry manner; second, the expression she used, being a French term, whose peculiar use I had learnt in the Convent, and whose meaning is rather softened when translated into *drag;* third, the place to which we were directed to take the interesting young nun, and the persons assembled there, as I supposed, to condemn her. My fears were such, concerning the fate that awaited her, and my horror at the idea that she was in some way to be sacrificed, that I would have given anything to be allowed to stay where I was. But I feared the consequences of disobeying the Superior, and proceeded with the rest towards the room for the examination of conscience.

The room to which we were to proceed from that, was in the second story, and the place of many a scene of a shameful nature. It is sufficient to say, after what I have said in other parts of this book, that things had there occurred which made me regard the place with the greatest disgust. Saint Frances had appeared melancholy for some time. I well knew that she had cause, for she had been repeatedly subject to trials which I need not name—our common lot. When we reached the room where we had been bidden to seek her, I entered the door, my companions standing behind me, as the place was so small as hardly to hold five persons at a time. The young nun was standing alone, near the middle of the room; she was probably about twenty, with light hair, blue eyes, and a very fair complexion. I spoke to her in a compassionate voice, but at the same time with such a decided manner, that she comprehended my meaning.

"Saint Frances, we are sent for you."

Several others spoke kindly to her, but two addressed her very harshly. The poor creature turned round with a look of meekness, and without expressing any unwillingness or fear, without even speaking a word, resigned herself to our hands. The tears came into my eyes. I had not a moment's doubt that she considered her fate as sealed, and was already beyond the fear of death. She was conducted or rather hurried to the staircase, which was near by, and then seized by her limbs and clothes, and in fact almost dragged up stairs, in the sense the Superior had intended. I laid my own hands upon her—I took hold of her, too, more gently indeed than some of the rest; yet I encouraged and assisted them in carrying her. I could not avoid it. My refusal would not have saved her, nor prevented her from being carried up; it would only have exposed me to some severe punishment, as I believe some of my companions would have seized the first opportunity to complain of me.

All the way up the staircase, Saint Frances spoke not a word, nor made the slightest resistance. When we entered, with her, the room to which she was ordered, my heart sank within me. The Bishop, the Lady Superior, and five priests, viz.: Bonin, Richards, Savage, and two others, I now ascertained, were assembled for trial, on some charge of great importance.

When we had brought our prisoner before them, Father Richards began to question her, and she made ready, but calm, replies. I cannot pretend to give a connected account of what ensued; my feelings were wrought up to such a pitch, that I knew not what I did, or what to do. I was under a terrible apprehension that, if I betrayed the feelings which overcame me, I should fall under the displeasure of the cold-blooded persecutors of my poor innocent sister; and this fear on the one hand, with the distress I felt for her on the other, rendered me almost frantic. As soon as I entered the room, I had stepped into a corner, on the left of the entrance, where I might partially support myself by leaning against the wall between the door and the window. This support was all that prevented me falling to the floor, for the confusion of my thoughts was so great, that only a few of the words I heard spoken on either side made any lasting impression upon me. I felt as if struck with some insupportable blow; and death would not have been more frightful to me. I am inclined to the belief that Father Richards wished to shield the poor prisoner from the severity of her fate, by drawing from her expressions that might bear a favourable construction. He asked her, among other things, if she was now sorry for what she had been overheard to say, (for she had been betrayed by one of the nuns,) and if she would not prefer confinement in the cells to the punishment which was threatened. But the Bishop soon interrupted him, and it was easy to perceive, that he considered her fate as sealed, and was determined she should not escape. In reply to some of the questions put to her, she was silent; to others I heard her voice reply that she did not repent of words she had uttered, though they had been reported by some of the nuns who had heard them; that she had firmly resolved to resist every attempt to compel her to the commission of crimes which she detested. She added that she would rather die than cause the murder of harmless babes.

"That is enough, finish her!" said the Bishop.

Two nuns instantly fell upon the woman, and in obedience to directions, given by the Superior, prepared to execute her sentence.

She still maintained all the calmness and submission of a lamb. Some of those who took part in this transaction, I believe, were as unwilling as myself; but of others I can safely say, I believe they delighted in it. Their conduct certainly exhibited a most blood-thirsty spirit. But above all others present, and above all human fiends I ever saw, I think Saint Hypolite was the most diabolical; she engaged in the horrid task with all alacrity, and assumed from choice the most revolting parts to be performed. She seized a gag, forced it into the mouth of the poor nun, and when it was fixed between her extended jaws, so as to keep them open at their greatest possible distance, took hold of the straps fastened at each end of the stick, crossed them behind the helpless head of the victim, and drew them tight through the loop prepared as a fastening.

The bed, which had always stood in one part of the room, still remained there; though the screen, which had usually been placed before it, and was made of thick muslin, with only a crevice through which a person might look out, had been folded up on its hingues in the form of a W., and placed in a corner. On the bed the prisoner was laid with her face upwards, and then bound with cords so that she could not move. In an instant, another bed was thrown upon her. One of the priests, named Bonin, sprung like a fury first upon it, with all his force. He was speedily followed by the nuns, until there were as many upon the bed as could find room, and all did what they could, not only to smother, but to bruise her. Some stood up and jumped upon the poor girl with their feet, some with their knees: and others, in different ways, seemed to seek how they might best beat the breath out of her body, and mangle it, without coming in direct contact with it, or seeing the effects of their violences. During this time, my feelings were almost too strong to be endured. I felt stupefied, and scarcely was conscious of what I did. Still, fear for myself remained in a sufficient degree to induce me to some exertion; and I attempted to talk to those who stood next, partly that I might have an excuse for turning away from the dreadful scene.

After the lapse of fifteen or twenty minutes, and when it was presumed that the sufferer had been smothered and crushed to death, Father Bonin and the nuns ceased to trample upon her, and stepped from the bed. All was motionless and silent beneath it.

They then began to laugh at such inhuman thoughts as occurred to some of them rallying each other in the most unfeeling manner, and ridiculing me for feelings which I in vain endeavoured to conceal. They alluded to the resignation of our murdered companion; and one of them taughtingly said, "She would have made a good Catholic martyr." After spending some moments in such conversation, one of them asked if the corpse should be removed. The Superior said it had better remain a little while. After waiting a short time longer, the feather-bed was taken off, the cords unloosed, and the body taken by the nuns and dragged down stairs. I was informed that it was taken into the cellar, and thrown unceremoniously into the hole which I have already described, covered with a great quantity of lime; and afterwards sprinkled with a liquid, of the properties and name of which I am ignorant. This liquid I have seen poured into the hole from large bottles, after the necks were broken off; and have heard that it is used in France to prevent the effluvia rising from cemeteries.

I did not soon recover from the shock caused by this scene; indeed, it still recurs to me, with most gloomy impressions. The next day, there was a melancholy aspect over everything, and recreation time passed in the dullest manner; scarcely anything was said above a whisper. I never heard much said afterwards about Saint Frances.

I spoke with one of the nuns, a few words, one day, but we were all cautioned not to expose ourselves very far, and could not place much reliance in each other. The murdered nun had been brought to her shocking end through the treachery of one of our number in whom she confided.

I never knew with certainty who had reported her remarks to the Superior, but suspicion fastened on one, and I never could regard her but with detestation.

I was more inclined to blame her than some of those employed in the execution; for there could have been no necessity for the betrayal of her feelings. We all knew how to avoid exposing each other.

I was often sent by the Superior to overhear what was said by novices and nuns, when they seemed to shun her; she would say, "Go and listen, they are speaking English;" and though I obeyed her, I never informed her against them. If I wished to clear my conscience, I would go to a priest and confess, knowing that he dared not communicate what I said to any person, and that he would not choose as heavy penances as the Superior.

We were always at liberty to choose another confessor when he had any sin to confess, which we were unwilling to tell one to whom we should otherwise have done.

Not long after the murder just related, a young woman came to the nunnery, and asked for permission to see St. Frances. It was my former friend, with whom I had been an assistant teacher, Miss Louisa Bousquet, of St. Denis. From this, I supposed the murdered nun might have come from that town, or its vicinity. The only answer was, that St. Frances was dead.

Some time afterwards, some of St. Frances' friends called to inquire after her, and they were told that she had died a glorious death; and further told, that she made some heavenly expressions, which were repeated in order to satisfy her friends.

CHAPTER XII.

Description of the Room of the three States, and the pictures in it—Jane Ray—Ridiculing Priests—Their criminal treatment of us at Confession—Jane Ray's tricks with the Nun's Aprons, Handkerchiefs, and Night Gowns—Apples.

The pictures in the room of the three states were large, and painted by some artist who understood how to make some horrible ones. They appeared to be stuck to the walls. The light is admitted from small and high windows, which are curtained, and is rather faint, so as to make everything look gloomy. The story told us was, that they were painted by an artist, to whom God had given power to represent things exactly as they are in heaven, hell, and purgatory.

In heaven, the picture of which hangs on one side of the apartment, multitudes of nuns and priests are put in the highest places, with the Virgin Mary at their head, St. Peter and other saints, far above the great numbers of good Catholics of other classes, who are crowded in below.

In purgatory are multitudes of people; and in one part, called "*The place of lambs*," are infants who died unbaptized. "*The place of darkness*" is that part of purgatory in which adults are collected, and there they are surrounded by flames, waiting to be delivered by the prayers of the living.

In hell, the picture of which, and that of purgatory, were on the wall opposite that of heaven, the human faces were the most horrible that can be imagined. Persons of different descriptions were represented, with the most distorted features, ghastly complexions, and every variety of dreadful expression; some with wild beasts gnawing at their heads, others furiously biting the iron bars which kept them in, with looks which could not fail to make a spectator shudder.

I could hardly persuade myself, that the figures were not living, and the impression they made on my feelings was powerful. I was often shown the place where nuns go who break their vows, as a warning. It is the hottest place in hell, and worse, in every point of view, even than that to which all Protestants are assigned; because they are not so much to be blamed, as we were sometimes assured, as their ministers and the Bible, by which they are perverted.

Whenever I was shut in that room, as I was several times, I prayed for "les âmes des fidèles trepasses;" the souls of those faithful ones who have long been in purgatory, and have no relations living to pray for them.

My feelings were often of the most painful description, while I remained alone with those frightful pictures.

Jane Ray was once put in, and uttered the most dreadful shrieks. Some of the old nuns proposed to the Superior to have her gagged; "No," she replied, "go and let out that devil, she makes me sin more than all the rest."

Jane could not endure the place; and she afterwards gave names to many of the worst figures of the pictures. On catechism-days she would take a seat behind a cupboard door, where the priest could not see her, while she faced the nuns, and would make us laugh. "You are not so attentive to your lessons as you used to be," he would begin to say, while we were endeavouring to suppress our laughter.

Jane would then hold up the first letter of some priest's name whom she had before compared with one of the faces in "hell," and so look that we could hardly preserve our gravity.

I remember she named the wretch who was biting at the bars of hell, with a serpent gnawing his head, with chains and padlocks on, Father Dufresne; and she would say—"Does he not look like him, when he comes in to catechism with his long solemn face, and begins his speeches with, 'My children, my hope is that you have lived very devout lives?' "

The first time I went to confession after taking the veil, I found abundant evidence that the priests did not treat even that ceremony, which is called a solemn sacrament, with respect enough to lay aside the shameless character they so often showed on other occasions. The confessor sometimes sat in the room for the examination of conscience, and sometimes in the Superior's room, and always alone except the nun who was confessing. He had a common chair placed in the middle of the floor, and instead of being placed behind a grate, or lattice, as in the chapel, had nothing before or around him. There were no spectators to observe him, and of course any such thing would have been unnecessary.

A number of nuns usually confessed on the same day, but only one could be admitted into the room at a time. They took their places just without the door, on their knees, and went through the preparation prescribed by the rules of confession; repeating certain prayers, which always occupy a considerable time. When one was ready, she rose from her knees, entered, and closed the door behind her; and no one even dared touch the latch till she came out.

I shall not tell what was transacted at such times, under the pretence of confessing, and receiving absolution from sin; far more sin was often incurred than pardoned; and crimes of a deep dye were committed, while trifling irregularities in childish ceremonies, were treated as serious offences. I cannot persuade myself to speak plainly on such a subject, as I must offend the virtuous ear. I can only say, that suspicion cannot do any injustice to the priests, because their sins cannot be exaggerated.

Some idea may be formed of the manner in which even such women as many of my sister nuns, regarded the father confessors, when I state that there was often a contest among us, to avoid entering the apartment as long as we could: endeavouring to make each other go first, as that was what most of us dreaded.

During the long and tedious days which filled up the time between the occurrences I have mentioned, nothing or little took place to keep up our spirits. We were fatigued in body with labour, or with sitting, debilitated by the long continuance of our religious exercises, and depressed in feelings by our miserable and hopeless condition. Nothing but the humours of mad Jane Ray could rouse us for a moment from our languor and melancholy.

To mention all her devices, would require more room than is here allowed, and a memory of almost all her words and actions for years. I had early become a favourite with her, and had opportunity to learn more of her character than most of the other nuns. As this may be learned from hearing what she did. I will here recount a few of her tricks, just as they happen to present themselves to my memory, with regard to the order of time.

She one day, in an unaccountable humour, sprinkled the floor plentifully with holy water, which brought upon her a severe lecture from the Superior, as might have been expected. The Superior said it was a heinous offence: she had wasted holy water enough to save many souls from purgatory: and what would they not give for it. She then ordered Jane to sit in the middle of the floor, and when the priest came, he was informed of her offence. Instead, however, of imposing one of those penances to which she had been subjected, but with so little effect, he said to her, "Go to your place, Jane; we forgive you for this time."

I was once set to iron aprons with Jane; aprons and pocket-handkerchiefs are the only articles of dress which are ever ironed in the Convent. As soon as we were alone, she remarked, "Well, we are free from the rules while we are at this work;" and, although she knew she had no reason for saying so, she began to sing, and I soon joined her, and thus we spent the time, while we were at work, to the neglect of the prayers that we ought to have said.

We had no idea that we were in danger of being overheard, but it happened that the Superior was overhead all the time, with several nuns, who were preparing for confession: she came down and said, "How is this?" Jane Ray coolly replied that we had employed our time in singing hymns, and referred to me. I was afraid to confirm so direct a falsehood, in order to deceive the Superior, though I had often told more injurious ones of her fabrication, or at her orders, and said very little in reply to Jane's request.

The Superior plainly saw the trick that was attempted, and ordered us both to the room for the examination of conscience, where we remained till night without a mouthful to eat. The time was not, however, unoccupied: I received such a lecture from Jane as I have very seldom heard, and she was so angry with me, that we did not speak to each other for two weeks.

At length she found something to complain of against me, had me subjected to a penance, which led to our begging each other's pardon, and we became perfectly satisfied, reconciled, and as good friends as ever.

One of the most disgusting penances we had ever to submit to, was that of drinking the water in which the Superior had washed her feet. Nobody could ever laugh at this penance except Jane Ray. She would pretend to comfort us, by saying she was sure it was better than mere plain clear water.

Some of the tricks which I remember, were played by Jane with nuns' clothes. It was a rule that the oldest aprons in use should go to the youngest received, and that the old nuns were to wear all the new ones. On four different occasions, Jane stole into the sleeping-room at night, and unobserved by the watch, changed a great part of the aprons, placing them by the beds of nuns to whom they did not belong. The consequence was, that in the morning they dressed themselves in such haste, as never to discover the mistake they made, until they were all ranged at prayers; and then the ridiculous appearance which many of them cut, disturbed the long devotions. I laugh so easy that, on such occasions, I usually incurred a full share of penances. I generally, however, got a new apron, when Jane played this trick; for it was part of her object to give the best aprons to her favourites, and put off the ragged ones on some of the old nuns whom she most hated.

Jane once lost her pocket-handkerchief. The penance for such an offence is, to go without any for five weeks. For this she had no relish, and requested me to pick one from some of the nuns on the way up stairs. I succeeded in getting two ; this Jane said was one too many. and she thought it dangerous for either of us to keep it, lest a search should be made. Very soon the two nuns were complaining that they had lost their handkerchiefs, and wondering what could have become of them, as they were sure they had been careful. Jane seized an opportunity, and slipped one into a straw bed, where it remained until the bed was emptied to be filled with new straw.

As the winter was coming on, one year, she complained to me that we were not as well supplied with warm night-clothes, as two of the nuns she named, whom she said she "abominated." She soon after found means to get possession of their fine warm flannel night-gowns, one of which she gave to me, while the other was put on at bedtime. She presumed the owners would have a secret search for them ; and in the morning hid them in the stove, after the fire had gone out, which was kindled a little before the hour of rising, and then suffered to burn down.

This she did every morning, taking them out at night through the winter. The poor nuns who owned the garments were afraid to complain of their loss, lest they should have some penance laid on them, and nothing was ever said about them. When the weather began to grow warm in the spring, Jane returned the night-gowns to the beds of the nuns from whom she had borrowed them, and they were probably as much surprised to find them again, as they had been before at losing them.

Jane once found an opportunity to fill her apron with a quantity af fine apples, called *fameuses*, which came in her way, and hastening up to the sleeping-room, hid them under my bed. Then coming down, she informed me, and we agreed to apply for leave to make our elevens, as it is called. The meaning of this is, to repeat a certain round of prayers, for nine days in succession, to some saint we choose to address for assistance in becoming more charitable, affectionate, or something else. We easily obtained permission, and hastened upstairs to begin our nine days' feast on the apples ; when, much to our surprise, they had all been taken away, and there was no way to avoid the disagreeable fate we had brought upon ourselves. Jane, therefore, began to search the beds of the other nuns : but not finding any trace of the apples, she became doubtly vexed, and stuck pins in those that belonged to her enemies.

When bed-time came, they were much scratched in getting into bed, which made them break silence, and that subjected them to penances.

CHAPTER XIII.

Jane Ray's tricks continued—The broomstick ghost—Sleep-walking—Salted cider—Changing beds—Objects of some of her tricks—Feigned Humility—Alarm.

One night, Jane, who had been sweeping the sleeping-room for a penance, dressed up the broomstick, when she had completed her work, with a white cloth on the end, so tied as to resemble an old woman dressed in white, with long arms sticking out. This she stuck through a broken pane of glass, and placed it so that it appeared to be looking in at the window, by the font of holy water. There it remained till the nuns came up to bed. The first who stopped at the font, to dip her finger in, caught a glimpse of the singular object, and started with terror. The next was equally terrified, as she approached, and the next, and the next.

We all believed in ghosts; and it was not wonderful that such an object should cause alarm, especially as it was but a short time after the death of one of the nuns. Thus they went on, each getting a fright in turn, yet all afraid to speak. At length, one more alarmed, or with less presence of mind than the rest, exclaimed, "Oh, mon Dieu! je ne me coucherais pas!" When the night watch called out, "Who's that?" she confessed she had broken silence, but pointed at the cause; and when all the nuns assembled at a distance from the window, Jane offered to advance boldly, and ascertain the nature of the apparition, which they thought a most resolute intention. We all stood looking on, when she stepped to the window, drew in the broomstick, and showed us the ridiculous puppet which had alarmed so many superstitious fears.

Some of her greatest feats she performed as a sleep-walker. Whether she ever walked in her sleep or not, I am unable, with certainly, to say. She, however, often imposed upon the Superior, and old nuns, by making them think so, when I knew she did not; and yet I cannot positively say that she always did. I have remarked that one of the old nuns was always placed in our sleeping-room at night, to watch us. Sometimes she would be inattentive, and sometimes fall into a doze. Jane Ray often seized such times to rise from her bed, and walk about, occasionally seizing one of the nuns in bed, in order to frighten her. This she generally effected; and many times we have been awakened by screams of terror. In our alarm, some of us frequently broke silence, and gave occasion to the Superior to lay us under penances. Many times, however, we escaped with a mere reprimand, while Jane usually received expressions of compassion: "Poor creature; she would not do so if she were in perfect possession of her reason." And Jane displayed her customary artfulness, in keeping up the false impression. As soon as she perceived that the old nun was likely to observe her, she would throw her arms about, or appear unconscious of what she was doing; falling upon a bed, or standing stock-still, until exertions had been made to rouse her from her supposed lethargy.

We were once allowed to drink cider at dinner, which was quite an extraordinary favour. Jane, however, on account of her negligence of all work, was denied the privilege, which she much resented. The next day, when dinner arrived, we began to taste our new drink, but it was so salt we could not swallow it. Those of us who first discovered it were as usual afraid to speak; but we set down our cups, and looked around, till the others made the same discovery, which they all soon did, and most of them in the same manner. Some, however, at length, taken by surprise, uttered some ludicrous exclamation, on tasting the salted cider, and then an old nun, looking across, would cry out—

"Ah! tu casses la silence." (Ah; you've broken silence.)

And thus we soon got a laughing, beyond our power of supporting it. At recreation that day, the first question asked by many of us was, "How did you like your cider?"

Jane Ray never had a fixed place to sleep in. When the weather began to grow warm in the spring, she usually pushed some bed out of its place, near a window, and put her own beside it; and when the winter approached, she would choose a spot near the stove, and occupy it with her bed, in spite of all remonstrance. We were all convinced that it was generally best to yield to her.

She was often set to work in different ways; but, whenever she was dissatisfied with doing any thing, would devise some trick that would make the Superior or old nuns drive her off; and whenever any suspicion was expressed of her being in her right mind, she would say that she did not know what she was doing; and all the difficulty arose from her repeating prayers too much, which wearied and distracted her mind.

I was once directed to assist Jane Ray in shifting the beds of the nuns. When we came to those of some of the sisters whom she most disliked, she said, now we will pay them for some of the penances we have suffered on their account; and taking some thistles, she mixed them with the straw. At night, the first of them that got into bed felt the thistles, and cried out. The night-watch exclaimed us usual, "You are breaking silence there." And then another screamed as she was scratched by the thistles, and another. The old nun then called on all who had broken silence to rise, and ordered them to sleep under their beds as a penance, which they silently complied with. Jane and I afterwards confessed, when it was all over, and took some trifling penance which the priest imposed.

Those nuns who fell most under the displeasure on mad Jane Ray, as I have intimated before, were those who had the reputation of being most ready to inform of the most trifling faults of others, and especially those who acted without any regard to honour, by disclosing what they had pretended to listen to in confidence. Several of the worst-tempered "saints'' she held in abhorrence; and I have heard her say, that such and such she abominated. Many a trick did she play upon these, some of which were painful to them in their consequences, and a good number of them have never been traced to this day. Of all the nuns, however, none other was regarded by her with so much detestation as St. Hypolite; for she was always believed to have betrayed St. Frances, and to have caused her murder. She was looked upon by us as the voluntary cause of her death, and of the crime which those of us committed, who, unwillingly, took part in her execution. We, on the contrary, being under the worst of fears for ourselves, in case of refusing to obey our masters and mistress, thought ourselves chargeable with less guilt, as unwilling assistants in a scene which it was impossible for us to prevent or delay. Jane has often spoke with me of the suspected informer, and always in terms of the greatest bitterness.

The Superior sometimes expressed commiseration for mad Jane Ray, but I never could tell whether she really believed her insane or not. I was always inclined to think, that she was willing to put up with some of her tricks, because they served to divert our minds from the painful and depressing circumstances in which we were placed. I knew the Superior's powers and habits of deception also, and that she would deceive us as willingly as any one else.

Sometimes she proposed to send Jane to St. Anne's, a place near Quebec, celebrated for the pilgrimages made to it by persons differently afflicted. It is supposed that some peculiar virtue exists there, which will restore health to the sick; and I have heard stories told in corroboration of the common belief. Many lame and blind persons, with others, visit St. Anne's every year, some of whom may be seen travelling on foot, and begging their food. The Superior would sometimes say that it was a pity that a woman like Jane Ray, capable of being so useful, should be unable to do her duties, in consequence of a malady which she thought might be cured by a visit to St. Anne's.

Yet to St. Anne's Jane was never sent, and her wild and varíious tricks continued as before. The rules of silence, which the others were so scrupulous in observing, she set at nought every hour; and as for other rules, she regarded them with as little respect when they stood in her way. She would now and then step out and stop the clock by which our exercises were regulated, and sometimes in this manner lengthened out our recreation till near twelve. At last the old nuns began to watch against such a trick, and would occasionally go out to see if the clock was going.

She once made a request that she might not eat with the other nuns, which was granted, as it seemed to proceed from a spirit of genuine humility, which made her regard herself as unworthy of our society.

It being most convenient, she was sent to the Superior's table, to take her meals after her; and it did not first occur to the Superior that Jane, in this manner, profited by the change, by getting much better food than the rest of us. Thus there seemed to be always something deeper than anybody at first suspected, at the bottom of everything she did.

She was once directed to sweep a community-room, under the sleeping-chamber. This office had before been assigned to the other nuns, as a penance; but the Superior, considering that Jane Ray did little or nothing, determined thus to furnish her with some employment.

She declared to us that she would not sweep it long, as we might soon be assured. It happened that the stove by which the community-room was warmed in the winter, had its pipe carried through the floor of our sleeping chamber, and thence across it in a direction opposite that in which the pipe of our stove was carried. It being then warm weather, the hole was left unstopped. After we had all retired to our beds, and while engaged in our silent prayers, we were suddenly alarmed by a bright blaze of fire, which burst from the hole in the floor, and threw sparks all around us. We thought the building was burning, and uttered cries of terror, regardless of the penances, the fear of which generally kept us silent.

The utmost confusion prevailed; for although we had solemnly vowed never to flee from the Convent even if it was on fire, we were extremely alarmed, and could not repress our feelings. We soon learnt the cause, for the flames ceased in a moment or two, and it was found that mad Jane Ray, after sweeping a little in the room beneath, had stuck a quantity of wet powder on the end of her broom, thrust it up through the hole in the cealing into our apartment, and with a lighted paper set it on fire.

The date of this alarm I must refer to a time soon after that of the election riots; for I recollect that she found means to get possession of some of the powder which was prepared at that time for an emergency to which some thought the Convent was exposed.

She once asked for pen and paper, and then the Superior told her if she wrote to her friends she must see it. She replied that it was for no such purpose: she wanted to write her confession, and thus make it once for all. She wrote it, handed it to the priest, and he gave it to the Superior, who read it to us. It was full of offences which she had never committed, evidently written to throw ridicule on confessions, and one of the most ludicrous productions I ever saw.

Our bedsteads were made with very narrow boards laid across them, on which the beds were laid. One day, while we were in the bed-chambers together, she proposed that we should misplace these boards. This was done, so that at night nearly a dozen nuns fell down upon the floor in getting into bed. A good deal of confusion naturally ensued, but the authors were not discovered. I was so conscience-stricken, however, that a week afterwards, while we were examining our consciences together, I told her I must confess the sin the next day. She replied, "Do as you like, but you will be sorry for it."

The next day, when we came before the Superior, I was just going to kneel and confess, when Jane, almost without giving me time to shut the door, threw herself at the Superior's feet and confessed the trick, and a penance was immediately laid upon me for the sin I had concealed.

There was an old nun who was a famous talker, whom we used to call La Mère (Mother.) One night, Jane Ray got up, and secretly changed the caps of several of the nuns; and hers among the rest. In the morning there was great confusion, and such a scene as seldom occurred. She was severely blamed by La Mère, having been informed against by some of the nuns; and at last became so much enraged, that she attacked the old woman, and even took her by the throat. La Mère called on all present to come to her assistance, and several nuns interfered. Jane seized the opportunity afforded in the confusion, to beat some of her worst enemies quite severely, and afterward said, that she had intended to kill some of the rascally informers.

For a time Jane made us laugh so much at prayers, that the Superior forbade her going down with us at morning prayers; and she took the opportunity to sleep in the morning. When this was found out, she was forbidden to get into her bed again after leaving it, and then she would creep under it and take a nap on the floor. This she told us of one day, but threatened us if we ever betrayed her. At length she was missed at breakfast, as she would sometimes oversleep herself, and the Superior began to be more strict, and always inquired, in the morning, whether Jane Ray was in her place.

When the question was general none of us answered; but when it was addressed to some nun near her by name, as,

"Saint Eustace, is Jane Ray in her place?" then we had to reply.

Of all the scenes that occurred during my stay in the Convent, there was none which excited the delight of Jane more than one which took place in the chapel one day at mass, though I never had any particular reason to suppose that she had brought it about.

Some person unknown to me to this day, had put some substance or other, of a most nauseous smell, into the hat of a little boy, who attended at the altar, and he, without observing the trick, put it upon his head. In the midst of the ceremonies he approached some of the nuns, who were almost suffocated with the odour; and as he occasionally moved from place to place, some of them began to beckon to him to stand further off, and to hold their noses, with looks of disgust. The boy was quite unconscious of the cause of the difficulty, and paid them no attention, but the confusion soon became so great through the distress of some, and the laughing of others, that the Superior noticed the circumstance, and beckoned the boy to withdraw.

All attempts, however, to engage us in any work, prayer, or meditation, were found ineffectual. Whenever the circumstances in the chapel came to mind, we would laugh out. We had got into such a state, that we could not easily restrain ourselves. The Superior, yielding to necessity, allowed us recreation for the whole day.

The Superior used sometimes to send Jane to instruct the novices in their English prayers. She would proceed to the task with all seriousness; but sometimes chose the most ridiculous, as well as irreverent passages from the songs, and other things, which she had sometimes learned, which would set us, who understood her, laughing. One of her rhymes, I recollect, began with—

"The Lord of love—look from above
Upon this turkey hen!"

Jane for a time slept opposite to me, and often in the night would rise, unobserved, and slip into my bed, to talk with me, which she did in a low whisper, and returned again with equal caution.

She would tell me of the tricks she had played, and such as she meditated, and sometimes make me laugh so loud, that I had much to do in the morning with begging pardons and doing penances.

One winter's day, she was sent to light a fire; but after she had done so, remarked privately to some of us, "my fingers were so cold—you'll see if I do it again."

The next day there was a great stir in the house, because it was said that mad Jane Ray had been seized with a fit while making a fire, and she was taken up apparently insensible, and conveyed to her bed. She complained to me, who visited her in the course of the day, that she was likely to starve, as food was denied her; and I was persuaded to pin a stocking under my dress, and secretly put food into it from the table. This I afterwards carried to her, and relieved her wants.

One of the things which I had blamed Jane most for, was a disposition to quarrel with any nun who seemed to be winning the favour of the Superior. She would never rest until she had brought such a one into some difficulty.

We were allowed but little soap; and Jane, when she found her supply nearly gone, would take the first piece she could find. One day there was a general search made for a large piece that was missed; when, soon after I had been searched, Jane Ray passed me, and slipped it into my pocket; she soon after was searched herself, and then secretly came for it again.

While I recall these particulars of our Nunnery, and refer so often to the conduct and language of one of the nuns, I cannot speak of some things, which I believed or suspected, on account of my want of sufficient knowledge. But it is a pity you have not Jane Ray for a witness; she knew many things of which I am ignorant. She must be in possession of facts that should be known. Her long residence in the Convent, her habits of roaming about it, and of observing everything, must have made her acquainted with things which would be heard with interest. I always felt as if she knew everything. She would often go and listen, or look through the cracks into the Superior's room, while any of the priests were closeted with her, and sometimes would come and tell me what she witnessed. I felt myself bound to confess on such occasions, and always did so.

She knew, however, that I only told it to the priest, or to the Superior, and without mentioning the name of my informant, which I was at liberty to withhold, so that she was not found out. I often said to her, "Don't tell me, Jane, for I must confess it." She would reply, "It is better for you to confess it than for me." I thus became, even against my will, informed of scenes supposed by the actors of them to be secret.

Jane Ray once persuaded me to accompany her into the Superior's room, to hide with her under the sofa, and await the appearance of a visitor whom she expected, that we might overhear what passed between them. We had been long concealed, when the Superior came in alone, and sat for some time; when, fearing she might detect us in the stillness that prevailed, we began to repent of our temerity. At length, however, she suddenly withdrew, and thus afforded us a welcome opportunity to escape.

I was passing one day through a part of the cellar, where I had not often occasion to go, when the toe of my shoe hit something. I tripped and fell down. I rose again, and holding my lamp to see what had caused my fall, I found an iron ring, fastened to a small square trap-door. This I had the curiosity to raise, and saw four or five steps down, but there was not light enough to see more, and I feared to be noticed by somebody and reported to the Superior; so, closing the door again, I left the spot. At first I could not imagine the use of such a passage; but it afterwards occurred to me that it might open to the subterranean passage to the Seminary; for I never could before account for the appearance of many of the priests, who often appeared and disappeared among us, particularly at night, when I knew the gates were closed. They could, as I now saw, come up to the door of the Superior's room at any hour; then up the stairs into our sleeping-room, or where they chose. And often they were in our beds before us.

I afterwards ascertained that my conjectures were correct, and that a secret communication was kept up in this manner between these two institutions, at the end towards Nôtre Dame street, at a considerable depth under ground. I often afterwards met priests in the cellar, when sent there for coals and other articles, as they had to pass up and down the common cellar stairs on their way.

My wearisome daily prayers and labours, my pain of body and depression of mind, which were so much increased by penances I had suffered, and those which I constantly reared, and the feelings of shame, remorse, and horror, which sometimes arose, brought me to a state which I cannot describe.

In the first place, my frame was enfeebled by the uneasy postures I was required to keep for so long a time during prayers.

This alone, I thought, was sufficient to undermine my health and destroy my life. An hour and a half every morning I had to sit on the floor of the community-room, with my feet under me, my body bent forward, and my head hanging on one side, in a posture expressive of great humility, it is true, but very fatiguing to keep for such an unreasonable length of time. Often I found it impossible to avoid falling asleep in this posture, which I could do without detection, by bending a little lower than usual. The signal to rise, or the noise made by the rising of the other nuns, then woke me, and I got up with the rest unobserved.

Before we took the posture just described, we had to kneel for a long time without bending the body, keeping quite erect, with the exception of the knees only, with the hands together before the breast. This I found the most distressing attitude for me, and never assumed it without feeling a sharp pain in my chest, which I often thought would soon lead me to my grave—that is, to the great common receptacle for the dead under the chapel. And this upright kneeling posture we were obliged to resume as soon as we rose from the half-sitting posture first mentioned, so that I usually felt myself exhausted and near to fainting before the conclusion of morning services.

I found the meditations extremely tedious, and often did I sink into sleep, while we were all seated in silence on the floor. When required to tell my meditations, as it was thought to be of no great importance what we said, I sometimes found that I had nothing to tell but a dream, and told that, which passed off very well.

Jane Ray appeared to be troubled still more than myself with wandering thoughts; and when blamed for them, would reply, "I begin very well; but directly I begin to think of some old friend of mine, and my thoughts go a wandering from one country to another."

Sometimes I confessed my falling asleep; and often the priests have talked to me about the sin of sleeping in the time of meditation. At last, one of them proposed to me that I should prick myself with a pin, which is often done, and so rouse myself for a time.

My close confinement in the Convent, and the want of opportunities to breathe the open air, might have proved more injurious to me than they did, had I not been employed a part of my time in more active labours than those of sewing, &c., to which I was chiefly confined. I took part occasionally in some of the heavy work, as washing, &c.

The events which I am now to relate occurred about five months after my admission into the Convent as a nun; but I cannot fix the time with precision, as I know not of anything that took place in the world about the same period. The circumstance I clearly remember; but as I have elsewhere remarked, we were not accustomed to keep any account of time.

Information was given to us one day, that another novice was to be admitted among us; and we were required to remember and mention her often in our prayers, that she might have faithfulness in the service of her holy spouse. No information was given us concerning her beyond this fact; not a word about her age, name, or nation. On all similar occasions the same course was pursued, and all that the nuns ever learnt concerning one another was what they might discover by being together, and which usually amounted to little or nothing.

When the day of her admission arrived, though I did not witness the ceremony in the chapel, it was a gratification to us all on one account, because we were always released from labour, and enjoyed a great recreation day.

Our new sister, when she was introduced to the "holy" society of us "saints," proved to be young, of about the middle size, and very good looking for a Canadian; for I soon ascertained that she was one of my own countrywomen. The Canadian females are generally not handsome. I never learnt her name nor anything of her history. She had chosen St. Martin for her nun name. She was admitted in the morning, and appeared melancholy all day. This I observed was always the case; and the remarks made by others, led me to believe that they, and all they had seen, had felt sad and miserable for a longer or shorter time. Even the Superior, as it may be recollected, confessed to me that she experienced the same feelings when she was received. When bed-time arrived, she proceeded to the chamber with the rest of us, and was assigned a bed on the side of the room opposite my own, and a little beyond. The nuns were all soon in bed, the usual silence ensued, and I was making my customary mental prayers, and composing myself to sleep, when I heard the most piercing and heart-rending shrieks proceed from our new comrade. Every nun seemed to rise as if by one impulse, for no one could hear such sounds, especially in such total silence, without being greatly excited. A general noise succeeded, for many voices spoke together, uttering cries of surprise, compassion, or fear. It was in vain for the night-watch to expect silence: for once we forgot rules and penances, and gave vent to our feelings, and she could do nothing but call for the Superior.

I heard a man's voice mingled with the cries and shrieks of the nun. Father Quiblier, of the Seminary, I had felt confident, was in the Superior's room at the time when we retired; and several of the nuns afterwards assured me that it was he. The Superior soon made her appearance, and in a harsh manner commanded silence. I heard her threaten gagging her, and then say, "You are no better than anybody else, and if you do not obey, you shall be sent to the cells."

One young girl was taken into the Convent during my abode there, under peculiar circumstances. I was acquainted with the whole affair, as I was employed to act a part in it.

Among the novices was a young lady, of about seventeen, the daughter of an old rich Canadian. She had been remarkable for nothing that I know of, except the liveliness of her disposition. The Superior once expressed to us a wish to have her take the veil, though the girl herself had never such intention that I know of. Why the Superior wished to receive her I could only conjecture. One reason might have been, that she expected to receive a considerable sum from her father. She was, however, strongly desirous of having the girl in our community, and one day said—"Let us take her in by a trick, and tell the old man she felt too humble to take the veil in public."

In obedience to the directions of the Superior we exerted ourselves to make her contented, especially when she was first received, when we got round her and told her we had felt so for a time, but having since become acquainted with the happiness of nun's life, were perfectly content, and would never be willing to leave the Convent. An exception seemed to be made in her favour, in one respect; for I believe no criminal attempt was made upon her, until she had been for some time an inmate of the nunnery.

Soon after her reception, or rather her forcible entry into the Convent, her father called to make enquiries about his daughter. The Superior first spoke with him herself, and then called us to repeat her plausible story, which I did with accuracy. If I had wished to say any thing else, I never should have dared.

We told the foolish old man, that his daughter, whom we all affectionately loved, had long desired to become a nun, but had been too humble to wish to appear before spectators, and had, at her own desire, been favoured with a private admission into the community.

The benefit conferred upon himself and his family, by this act of self-consecration, I reminded him, must be truly great and valuable; as every family who furnishes a priest or a nun, is justly looked upon as receiving the peculiar favour of heaven on that account. The old Canadian, firmly believing every word I was forced to tell him, took the event as a great blessing, and expressed the greatest readiness to pay more than the customary fee to the Convent. After the interview, he withdrew, promising soon to return, and pay a handsome sum, of money to the Convent, which he performed with all despatch and the greatest cheerfulness. The poor girl never heard that her father had taken the trouble to call and see her, much less did she know any thing of the imposition passed upon her. She remained in the Convent when I left it.

The youngest girl who ever took the veil of our sisterhood, was only fourteen years of age, and considered very pious. She lived but a short time. I was told that she was ill-treated by the priests, and believed her death was in consequence.

CHAPTER XIV.

Influencing novices—Difficulty of convincing persons from the United States—Tale of the Bishop in the city—The Bishop in the convent—The prisoners in the cells—Practice in singing—Narratives—Jane Ray's hymns—The Superior's best trick.

It was considered a great duty to exert ourselves to influence novices in favour of the Roman Catholic religion; and different nuns were, at different times, charged to do what they could, by conversation, to make favourable impressions on the minds of some, who were particularly indicated to us by the Superior. I often heard it remarked, that those who were influenced with the greatest difficulty, were young ladies from the United States; and on some of those, great exertions were made.

Cases in which citizens of the States were said to have been converted to the Roman Catholic faith were sometimes spoken of, and always as if they were considered highly important.

The Bishop, as we were told, was in the public square, on the day of an execution, when, as he said, a stranger looked at him in some peculiar manner, which made him confidently believe God intended to have him converted by his means. When he went home he wrote a letter for him, and the next day he found him again in the same place, and gave him the letter, which led to his becoming a Roman Catholic. This man, it was added, proved to be a citizen of the States.

The Bishop, as I have remarked, was not very dignified on all occasions, and sometimes acted in such a manner as would not have appeared well in public.

One day I saw him preparing for mass; and because he had some difficulty in getting on his robes, showed evident signs of anger. One of the nuns remarked: "The Bishop is going to perform a passionate mass." Some of the others exclaimed: "Are you not ashamed to speak thus of my lord?" And she was rewarded with a penance.

But it might be hoped that the Bishop would be free from the crimes of which I have declared so many priests to have been guilty. I am far from entertaining such charitable opinions of him; and I had good reasons, after a time.

I was often required to sleep on a sofa, in the room of the present Superior, as I may have already mentioned.

One night, not long after I was first introduced there for that purpose, and within the first twelve months of my wearing the veil, having retired as usual, at about half-past nine, not long after we had got into bed, the alarm-bell from without, which hangs over the Superior's bed, was rung. She told me to see who was there; and going down, I heard the signal given, which I have before mentioned, a peculiar kind of hissing sound made through the teeth. I answered with a low "Hum—hum;" and then opened the door. It was Bishop Lartique, the present Bishop of Montreal. He said to me, "Are you a Novice or a Received?" meaning a Received nun. I answered, "a Received.'

He then requested me to conduct him to the Superior's room, which I did. He went to the bed, drew the curtains behind him, and I lay down again upon the sofa, until morning, when the Superior called me, at an early hour, about daylight, and directed me to show him the door, to which I conducted him, and he took his departure.

I continued to visit the cellar frequently, to carry up coal for the fires, without anything more than a general impression that there were two nuns somewhere imprisoned in it. One day, while there on my usual errand, I saw a nun standing on the right of the cellar, in front of one of the cell doors I had before observed; she was apparently engaged with something within. This attracted my attention. The door appeared to close in a small recess, and was fastened with a stout iron bolt on the outside, the end of which was secured by being let into a hole in the stonework which formed the posts. The door, which was of wood, was sunk a few inches beyond the stonework, which rose and formed an arch overhead. Above the bolt was a small window, supplied with a fine grating, which swung open, a small bolt having been removed from it, on the outside. The nun I had observed seemed to be whispering with some person within, through the little window; but I hastened to get my coal, and left the cellar, presuming that was the prison. When I visited the place again, being alone, I ventured to the spot, determined to learn the truth, presuming that the imprisoned nuns, of whom the Superior had told me on my admission, were confined there. I spoke at the window where I had seen the nun standing, and heard a voice reply in a whisper. The aperture was so small, and the place so dark, that I could see nobody; but I learnt that a poor wretch was confined there a prisoner. I feared that I might be discovered, and after a few words, which I thought could do no harm, I withdrew.

My curiosity was now alive to learn everything I could about so mysterious a subject. I made a few inquiries of St. Xavier, who only informed me that they were punished for refusing to obey the Superior, Bishop, and Priests. I afterwards found that the other nuns were acquainted with the fact I had just discovered. All I could learn, however, was that the prisoner in the cell whom I had just spoken with, and another in the cell just beyond, had been confined there several years without having been taken out ; but their names, connexions, offences, and everything else relating to them, I could never learn, and am still as ignorant of as ever. Some conjectured that they had refused to comply with some of the rules of the Convent, or requisitions of the Superior ; others, that they were heiresses whose property was desired for the Convent, and who would not consent to sign deeds of it. Some of the nuns informed me, that the severest of their sufferings arose from fear of supernatural beings.

I often spoke with one of them in passing near their cells, when on errands in the cellar, but never ventured to stop long, or to press my inquiries very far. Besides, I found her reserved, and little disposed to converse freely, a thing I could not wonder at when I considered her situation, and the character of persons around her. She spoke like a woman in feeble health, and of broken spirits. I occasionally saw other nuns speaking to them, particularly at meal times, when they were regularly furnished with food, which was such as we ourselves ate.

Their cells were occasionally cleaned, and then the doors were opened. I never looked into them, but was informed that the ground was their only floor. I presumed that they were furnished with straw to lie upon, as I always saw a quantity of old straw scattered about that part of the cellar, after the cells had been cleaned. I once inquired of one of them whether they could converse together, and she replied that they could, through a small opening between their cells, which I could not see.

I once inquired of the one I spoke with in passing, whether she wanted anything, and she replied, " Tell Jane Ray I want to see her a moment if she can slip away." When I went up I took an opportunity to deliver my message to Jane, who concerted with me a signal to be used in future, in case a similar request should be made through me. This was a sly wink at her with one eye, accompanied with a slight toss of the head. She then sought an opportunity to visit the cellar, and was soon able to hold an interview with the poor prisoners, without being noticed by any one but myself. I afterwards learnt that mad Jane Ray was not so mad but she could feel for those miserable beings, and carry through measures for their comfort. She would often visit them with sympathizing words, and when necessary, conceal part of her food while at table, and secretly convey it into their dungeons. Sometimes we would combine for such an object ; and have repeatedly aided her in thus obtaining a larger supply of food than they had been able to obtain from others.

I frequently thought of the two nuns confined in the cells, and occasionally heard something said about them, but very little. Whenever I visited the cellar and thought it safe, I went up to the first of them and spoke a word or two, and usually got some brief reply, without ascertaining that any particular change took place with either of them. The one with whom alone I ever conversed, spoke English perfectly well, and French I thought as well. I supposed she must have been well educated, for I could not tell which was her native language. I remember that she frequently used these words when I wished to say more to her, and which alone showed that she was constantly afraid of punishment, "Oh, there's somebody coming—do go away!" I have been told that the other prisoner also spoke English.

It was impossible for me to form any certain opinion about the size or appearance of those two miserable creatures, for their cells were perfectly dark, and I never caught the slightest glimpse even of their faces. It is probable they were women not above the middle size, and my reason for this presumption is the following: I was sometimes appointed to lay out the clean clothes for all the nuns in the Convent on Saturday evening, and was always directed to lay by two suits for the prisoners. Particular orders were given to select the largest sized garments for several tall nuns; but nothing of the kind was ever said in relation to the clothes for those in the cells.

I had not been long a veiled nun, before I requested of the Superior permission to confess to the "Saint Bon Pasteur," (Holy Good Shepherd) that is, the mysterious and nameless nun whom I had heard of while a novice. I knew of several others who had confessed to her at different times, and of some who had sent their clothes to be touched by her when they were sick; and I felt a desire to unburden my heart of certain things, which I was loath to acknowledge to the Superior, or any of the priests.

The Superior made me wait a little, until she could ascertain whether the "Saint Bon Pasteur" was ready to admit me; and, after a time, returned, and told me to enter the old nuns' room. That apartment has twelve beds arranged like the berths of a ship, by threes; and as each is broad enough to receive two persons, twenty-four may be lodged there, which was about the number of old nuns in the Convent during most of my stay in it. Near an opposite corner of the apartment was a large glass case, with no appearance of a door, or other opening, in any part of it; and in that case stood the venerable nun, in the dress of the community, with her thick veil spread over her face, so as to conceal it entirely. She was standing, for the place did not allow room for sitting, and moved a little, which was the only sign of life, as she did not speak. I fell upon my knees before her, and began to confess some of my imperfections, which lay heavy upon my mind, imploring her aid and intercession, that I might be delivered from them. She appeared to listen to me with patience, but still never returned a word in reply. I became much affected as I went on; at length began to weep bitterly: and, when I withdrew, was in tears. It seemed to me that my heart was remarkably relieved, after this exercise; and all the requests I had made, I found, as I believed, strictly fulfilled. I often, afterwards, visited the old nuns' room for the same purpose, and with similar results; so that my belief in the sanctity of the nameless nun, and my regard for her intercession, were unbounded.

What is remarkable, though I repeatedly was sent into that room to dust it, or to put it in order, I remarked, that the glass case was vacant and no signs were to be found, either of the nun, or of the way by which she had left it! so that a solemn conclusion rested upon my mind, that she had gone on one of her frequent visits to heaven.

A priest would sometimes come in the daytime to teach us to sing, and this was done with some parade or stir, as if it were considered, or meant to be considered, as a thing of importance.

The instructions, however, were entirely repetitions of the words and tunes, nothing being taught even of the first principles of the science. It appeared to me, that although hymns alone were sung, the exercise was chiefly designed for our amusement, to raise our spirits a little, which were apt to become depressed. Mad Jane Ray certainly usually treated the whole thing as a matter of sport, and often excited those of us who understood English, to a great degree of mirth. She had a very fine voice, which was so powerful as generally to be heard above the rest. Sometimes she would be silent when the other nuns began; and the Superior would often call out, "Jane Ray, you don't sing." She always had some trifling excuse ready, and commonly appeared unwilling to join the rest.

After being urged or commanded by the Superior, she would then strike up some English song, or profane parody, which was rendered ten times more ridiculous by the ignorance of the lady Superior and the majority of the nuns. I cannot help laughing now when I remember how she used to stand with perfect composure, and sing,

"I wish I was married and nothing to rue,
With plenty of money and nothing to do."

"Jane Ray, you don't sing right," the Superior would exclaim. "Oh," she would reply with perfect coolness, that is the English for

"Seigneur Dieu de clemence,
Recois ce grand pecheur!"

and, as sung by her, a person ignorant of the language would naturally be imposed upon. It was extremely difficult for me to conceal my laughter. I have always had greater exertion to make in repressing it than most other persons; and mad Jane Ray often took advantage of this.

Saturday evening usually brought with it much unpleasant work for some of us. We received Sacrament every Sunday; and in preparation for it, on Saturday evening, we asked pardon of the Superior, and of each other, "for the scandal we had caused them since we last received the Sacrament," and then asked the Superior's permission to receive it on the following day. She enquired of each nun, who necessarily asked her permission, whether she, naming her as Saint somebody, had concealed any sin that should hinder her receiving it; and if the answer was in the negative, she granted her permission.

On Saturday we were catechised by a priest, being assembled in a community-room. He sat on the right of the door, in a chair. He often told us stories, and frequently enlarged on the duty of enticing novices into the nunnery. "Do you not feel happy," he would say, "now that you are safely out of the world, and sure of heaven? But remember how many poor people are yet in the world. Every novice you influence to take the black veil, will add to your honour in heaven. Tell them how happy you are."

The Superior played one trick while I was in the Convent, which always passed for one of the most admirable she ever carried into execution. We were pretty good judges in a case of this kind; for, as may be persumed, we were rendered familiar with the arts of deception under so accomplished a teacher.

There was an ornament on hand in the Nunnery, of an extraordinary kind, which was prized at ten pounds; but it had been exposed to view so long, that it became damaged and quite unsaleable. We were one day visited by an old priest from the country, who was evidently somewhat intoxicated; and as he withdrew to go to his lodgings in the Seminary, where the country priests often stay, the Superior conceived a plan for disposing of the old ornament. "Come," said she, "we will send it to the old priest, and swear he has bought it."

We all approved of the ingenious device, for it evidently classed among the pious frauds we had so often had recommended to us, both by precept and example; and the ornament was sent to him the next morning, as his property when paid for. He soon came into the Convent, and expressed the greatest surprise that he had been charged with purchasing such a thing, for which he had no need and no desire.

The Superior heard his declaration with patience, but politely insisted that it was a fair bargain; and we then surrounded the old priest, with the strongest assertions that such was the fact, and that nobody would have thought of his purchasing it unless he had expressly engaged to take it. The poor old man was entirely put down. He was certain of the truth; but what could he do to resist or disprove a direct falsehood pronounced by the Superior of a Convent, and sworn to by all her holy nuns? He finally expressed his conviction that we were right: and was compelled to pay his money.

CHAPTER XV.

Frequency of the priests' visits to the Nunnery—Their freedom and crimes—Difficulty of learning their names—Their Holy Retreat—Objections in our minds—Means used to counteract conscience—Ingenious Arguments.

SOME of the priests from the Seminary were in the Nunnery every day and night, and often several at a time. I have seen nearly all of them at different times, though there are about one hundred and fifty in the district of Montreal. There was a difference in their conduct: though I believe every one of them was guilty of licentiousness; while not one did I ever see who maintained a character any way becoming the profession of a priest. Some were gross and degraded in a degree which few of my readers can ever have imagined: and I should be unwilling to offend the eye, and corrupt the heart, of any one, by an account of their words and actions. Few imaginations can conceive deeds so abominable as they practised, and often required of some of the poor women, under the fear of severe punishments, and even of death. I do not hesitate to say with the strongest confidence, that although some of the nuns became lost to every sentiment of virtue and honour, especially one of the Congregational Nunnery whom I have before mentioned, Saint Patrick, the greater part of them loathed the practices to which they were compelled to submit, by their Superior and priests, who kept them under so dreadful a bondage.

Some of the priests whom I saw I never knew by name, and the names of others I did not learn for a time, and at last learnt only by accident.

They were always called "Mon Père," (my father,) but sometimes when they had purchased something in the ornament-room, they would give their real names, with directions where it should be sent. Many names thus learnt, and in other ways, were whispered about from nun to nun, and became pretty generally known. Several of the priests some of us had seen before we entered the Convent.

Many things of which I speak, from the nature of the case, must necessarily rest chiefly upon my own word, until further evidence can be obtained; but there are some facts for which I can appeal to the knowledge of others. It is commonly known in Montreal that some of the priests occasionally withdraw from their customary employments, and are not to be seen for some time; it being understood that they have retired for religious study, meditation, and devotion, for the improvement of their hearts. Sometimes they are thus withdrawn from the world for three weeks: but there is no fixed period.

This was a fact I knew before I took the veil; for it is a frequent subject of remark, that such and such a Father is on a "holy retreat." This is a term which conveys the idea of a religious seclusion from the world, for sacred purposes. On the reappearance of a priest after such a period, in the church or the streets, it is natural to feel a peculiar impression of his devout character—an impression very different from that conveyed to the mind who knows matters as they really are. Suspicions have been indulged by some in Canada on this subject, and facts are known by at least a few. I am able to speak from personal knowledge; for I have been a nun of Sœur Bourgeoise.

The priests are liable, by their dissolute habits, to occasional attacks of disease, which render it necessary, or at least prudent, to submit to medical treatment.

In the Black Nunnery they find private accommodation, for they are free to enter one of the private hospitals whenever they please; which is a room set apart on purpose for the accommodation of the priests, and is called a retreat-room. But an excuse is necessary to blind the public, and this they find in the pretence they make of being in a "Holy Retreat." Many such cases have I known; and I can mention the names of priests who have been confined in this Holy Retreat. They are very carefully attended by the Superior and old nuns, and their diet consists mostly of vegetable soups, &c., with but little meat, and that fresh. I have seen an instrument of surgery lying upon the table in that holy room, which is used only for particular purposes.

Father Tombeau, a Roman priest, was on one of his holy retreats about the time when I left the Nunnery. There are sometimes a number confined there at the same time. The victims of these priests frequently share the same fate.

I have often reflected how grievously I had been deceived in my opinions of a nun's condition!—All the holiness of their lives, I now saw was merely pretended. The appearance of sanctity and heavenly-mindedness which they had shown among us novices, I found was only a disguise to conceal such practices as would not be tolerated in any decent society in the world; and as for joy and peace like that of heaven, which I had expected to find among them, I learnt too well that they did not exist there.

The only way in which such thoughts were counteracted, was by the constant instructions given us by the Superior and priests, to regard every doubt as a mortal sin. Other faults we might have, as we were told over and over again, which though worthy of penances, were far less sinful than these. For a nun to doubt that she was doing her duty in fulfilling her vows and oaths, was a heinous offence, and we were exhorted always to suppress our doubts, to confess them without reserve, and cheerfully submit to severe penances on account of them, as the only means of mortifying our evil dispositions, and resisting the temptations of the devil. Thus we learnt in a good degree to resist our minds and consciences, when we felt the rising of a question about the duty of doing anything required of us.

To enforce this upon us, they employ various means. Some of the most striking stories told us at catechism by the priests, were designed for this end. One of these I will repeat. "One day," as a priest assured us, who was hearing us say the catechism on Saturday afternoon, "as one Monsieur * * * *, a well-known citizen of Montreal, was walking near the cathedral, he saw Satan giving orders to innumerable evil spirits who were assembled around him. Being afraid of being seen, and yet wishing to observe what was done, he hid himself where he could observe all that passed. Satan despatched his devils to different parts of the city, with directions to do their best for him ; and they returned in a short time, bringing in reports of their success in leading persons of different classes to the commission of various sins, which they thought would be agreeable to their master. Satan, however, expressed his dissatisfaction, and ordered them out again; but just then a spirit from the Black Nunnery came, who had not been seen before, and stated that he had been trying for seven years to persuade one of the nuns to doubt, and had just succeeded. Satan received the intelligence with the highest pleasure ; and turning to the spirits around him, said: 'You have not half done your work,—he has done much more than all of you put together.'"

In spite, however, of our instructions and warnings, our fears and penances, such doubts would obtrude ; and I have often indulged them for a time, and at length, yielding to the belief that I was wrong in giving place to them, would confess them, and undergo with cheerfulness such new penances as I was loaded with. Others too would occasionally entertain and privately express such doubts; though we had all been most solemnly warned by the cruel murder of Saint Frances. Occasionally some of the nuns would go further, and resist the restraints of punishments imposed upon them ; and it was not uncommon to hear screams, sometimes of a most piercing and terrific kind, from nuns suffering under discipline.

Some of my readers may feel disposed to exclaim against me, for believing things which will strike them as so monstrous and abominable. To such, I would say, without pretending to justify myself,—you know little of the position in which I was placed ; in the first place, ignorant of any other religious doctrines, and in the second, met at every moment by some ingenious argument, and the example of a large community, who received all the instructions of the priests as of undoubted truth, and practised upon them. Of the variety and speciousness of the arguments used, you cannot have any correct idea. They were often so ready with replies, examples, anecdotes, and authorities, to enforce their doctrines, that it seemed to me as if they could never have learnt it all from books, but must have been taught by wicked spirits. Indeed, when I reflect upon their conversations, I am astonished at their art and address, and find it difficult to account for their subtlety and success in influencing my mind, and persuading me to anything they pleased. It seems to me that hardly anybody would be safe in their hands. If you were to go to confession twice, I believe you would feel very different from what you do now. They have such a way of avoiding one thing and speaking of another, of affirming this, and doubting and disputing that, of quoting authorities, and speaking of wonders and miracles recently performed, in confirmation of what they teach, as familiarly known to persons whom they call by name, and whom they pretend to offer as witnesses, though they never give you an opportunity to speak with them,—these, and many other means, they use in such a way, that they always blinded my mind, and, I should think, would blind the minds of others.

CHAPTER XVI.

Treatment of young Infants in the Convent—Talking in Sleep—Amusements—Ceremonies at the public Interment of deceased Nuns—Sudden disappearance of the Old Superior—Introduction of the new one—Superstition—Alarm of a nun—Difficulty of Communication with other Nuns.

It will be recollected, that I was informed immediately after receiving the veil, that infants were occasionally murdered in the Convent. I was one day in the nun's private sick room, when I had an opportunity unsought for, of witnessing deeds of such a nature. It was, perhaps, a month after the death of St. Frances. Two little twin babes, the children of St. Catherine, were brought to a priest, who was in the room, for baptism. I was present while the ceremony was performed, with the Superior and several of the old nuns, whose names I never knew, they being called Ma tante (Aunt.)

The priests took turns in attending to confession and catechism in the Convent, usually three months at a time, though sometimes longer periods. The priest then on duty was Father Larkin. He is a good-looking European, and has a brother who is a Professor in the College. He first put oil upon the heads of the infants, as is the custom before baptism. When he had baptised the children, they were taken, one after another, by one of the old nuns, in the presence of us all. She pressed her hand upon the mouth and nose of the first so tight that it could not breathe, and in a few minutes, when the hand was removed, it was dead. She then took the other, and treated it in the same way. No sound was heard, and both the children were corpses. The greatest indifference was shown by all present during this operation; for all, as I well knew, were long accustomed to such scenes. The little bodies were then taken into the cellar, thrown into the pit I have mentioned, and covered with a quantity of lime.

I afterwards saw a new-born infant treated in the same manner, in the same place; but the actors in this scene I choose not to name, nor the circumstances, as every thing connected with it is of a peculiarly trying and painful nature to my own feelings.

These were the only instances of infanticide I witnessed; and it seemed to be merely owing to accident that I was then present. So far as I know there were no pains taken to preserve secrecy on this subject; that is, I saw no attempt made to keep any inmate of the Convent in ignorance of the murder of the children. On the contrary, others were told, as well as myself, on their first admission as veiled nuns, that all infants born in the place were baptised and killed, without loss of time; and I had been called to witness the murder of the three just mentioned, only because I happened to be in the room at the time.

That others were killed in the same manner, during my stay in the nunnery, I am well assured.

How many there were I cannot tell, and having taken no account of those I heard of, I cannot speak with precision; I believe, however, that I learnt through nuns, that at least eighteen or twenty infants were smothered, and secretly buried in the cellar, while I was a nun.

One of the effects of the weariness of our bodies and minds, was our proneness to talk in our sleep. It was both ludicrous and painful to hear the nuns repeat their prayers in the course of the night, as they frequently did in their dreams. Required to keep our minds continually on the stretch, both in watching our conduct, in remembering the rules and our prayers, under the fear of the consequences of any neglect, when we closed our eyes in sleep, we often went over again the scenes of the day; and it was no uncommon thing for me to hear a nun repeat one or two of her long exercises in the dead of the night. Sometimes by the time she had finished, another, in a different part of the room, would happen to take a similar turn, and commence a similar recitation; and I have known cases in which several such unconscious exercises were performed, all within an hour or two.

We had now and then a recreation day, when we were relieved from our customary labour, and from all prayers except those for morning and evening, and the short ones said at every striking of the clock. The greater part of our time was then occupied with different games, particularly backgammon and draughts, and in such conversation as did not relate to our past lives, and the outside of the Convent. Sometimes, however, our sports would be interrupted on such days by the entrance of one of the priests, who would come in and propose that his fête, the birthday of his patron saint, should be kept by "the saints." We saints!

Several nuns died at different times while I was in the Convent; how many, I cannot say, but there was a considerable number. I might rather say many in proportion to the number in the nunnery. The proportion of deaths I am sure was very large. There were always some in the nuns' sick-room, and several interments took place in the chapel.

When a Black Nun is dead, the corpse is dressed as if living, and placed in the chapel in a sitting posture, within the railing round the altar, with a book in hand as if reading. Persons are then freely admitted from the street, and some of them read and pray before it. No particular notoriety is given, I believe, to this exhibition out of the Convent, but such a case usually excites some attention.

The living nuns are required to say prayers for the delivery of their deceased sister from purgatory, being informed, as in all other such cases, that if she is not there, and has no need of our intercession, our prayers are in no danger of being thrown away, as they will be set down to the account of some of our deceased friends, or at least to that of the souls which have no acquaintances to pray for them.

It was customary for us occasionally to kneel before a dead nun thus seated in the chapel, and I have often performed that task. It was always painful, for the ghastly countenance being seen whenever I raised my eyes, and the feeling that the position and dress were entirely opposed to every idea of propriety in such a case, always made me melancholy.

The Superior sometimes left the Convent, and was absent for an hour, or several hours at a time, but we never knew of it until she had returned, and were not informed where she had been. I one day had reason to presume that she had recently paid a visit to the priests' farm, though I had not direct evidence that such was the fact. The priests' farm is a fine tract of land belonging to the Seminary, a little distance from the city, near the Lachine road, with a large old-fashioned edifice upon it. I happened to be in the Superior's room on the day alluded to, when she made some remark on the plainness and poverty of her furniture. I replied that she was not proud, and could not be dissatisfied on that account: she answered,—"No: but if I was, how much superior is the furniture at the priests' farm; the poorest room there is furnished better than the best of mine."

I was one day mending the fire in the Superior's room, when a priest was conversing with her on the scarcity of money; and I heard him say that very little money was received by the priests for prayers, but that the principal part came with penances and absolutions.

One of the most remarkable and unaccountable things that happened in the Convent, was the disappearance of the old Superior. She had performed her customary part during the day, and had acted and appeared just as usual. She had shown no symptoms of ill health, met with no particular difficulty in conducting business, and no agitation, anxiety, or gloom had been noticed in her conduct. We had no reason to suppose that during that day she had expected anything particular to occur, any more than the rest of us. After the close of our customary labours and evening lectures, she dismissed us to retire to bed, exactly in her usual manner. The next morning the bell rang, we sprang from our beds, hurried on our clothes as usual, and proceeded to the community-room in double line, to commence the morning exercises. There, to our surprise, we found Bishop Lartique; but the Superior was nowhere to be seen. The Bishop soon addressed us, instead of her, and informed us, that a lady near him, whom he presented to us, was now the Superior of the Convent, and enjoined upon us the same respect and obedience which we paid to her predecessor.

The lady he introduced to us was one of our oldest nuns, Saint Du***, a very large, fleshy woman, with swelled limbs, which rendered her very slow in walking, and often gave her great distress. Not a word was dropped from which we could conjecture the cause of this change, nor of the fate of the old Superior. I took the first opportunity to inquire of one of the nuns, whom I dared to talk to, what had become of her; but I found them as ignorant as myself, though suspicious that she had been murdered by order of the Bishop. Never did I obtain any light on her mysterious disappearance. I am confident, however, that if the Bishop wished to get rid of her privately, and by foul means, he had ample opportunities and power at his command. Jane Ray, as usual, could not allow such an occurrence to pass by without intimating her own suspicions more plainly than any other of the nuns would have dared to do. She spoke out one day in the community-room, and said, "I'm going to have a hunt in the cellar for my old Superior."

"Hush, Jane Ray!" exclaimed some of the nuns, "you'll be punished."

"My mother used to tell me," replied Jane, "never to be afraid of the face of man."

It cannot be thought strange that we were superstitious. Some were more easily terrified than others by unaccountable sights and sounds; but all of us believed in the power and occasional appearance of spirits, and were ready to look for them at almost any time. I have seen several instances of alarm caused by such superstition, and have experienced it myself more than once. I was one day sitting mending aprons, beside one of the old nuns, in the community-room, while the litanies were repeating: as I was very easy to laugh, Saint Ignace, or Agnes, came in, walked up to her with much agitation, and began to whisper in her ear. She usually talked but little, and that made me more curious to know what was the matter. I overheard her say to the old nun, in much alarm, that in the cellar from which she had just returned, she had heard the most dreadful groans that ever came from any human being. This was enough to give me uneasiness. I could not account for the appearance of an evil spirit in any part of the Convent, for I had been assured that the only one ever known there was that of the nun who had died with an unconfessed sin; and that others were kept at a distance by the holy water that was rather profusely used in different parts of the nunnery. Still, I presumed that the sounds heard by Saint Ignace must have proceeded from some devil, and I felt great dread at the thought of visiting the cellar again. I determined to seek further information of the terrified nun, but when I addressed her on the subject, at recreation-time, the first opportunity I could find, she replied, that I was always trying to make her break silence, and walked off to another group in the room, so that I could obtain no satisfaction.

It is remarkable that in our nunnery, we were almost entirely cut off from the means of knowing anything even of each other. There were many nuns whom I know nothing of to this day, after having been in the same rooms with them every day and night for four years. There was a nun, whom I supposed to be in the Convent, and whom I was anxious to learn something about from the time of my entrance as a novice; but I never was able to learn anything concerning her, not even whether she was in the nunnery or not, whether alive or dead. She was the daughter of a rich family, residing at Point aux Trembles, of whom I had heard my mother speak before I entered the Convent. The name of her family I think was Lafayette, and she was thought to be from Europe. She was known to have taken the Black Veil; but as I was not acquainted with the Saint she had assumed, and I could not describe her in "the world," all my inquiries and observations proved entirely in vain.

I had heard before my entrance into the Convent, that one of the nuns had made her escape from it during the last war, and once inquired about her of the Superior. She admitted that such was the fact: but I was never able to learn any particulars concerning her name, origin, or manner of escape.

CHAPTER XVII.

Disappearance of nuns—St. Pierre—Gags—My temporary confinement in a cell—The cholera season—How to avoid it—Occupations in the Convent during the pestilence—Manufacture of wax candles—The election riots—Alarm among the nuns—Preparations for defence—Penances.

I AM unable to say how many nuns disappeared while I was in the Convent. There were several. One was a young lady called St. Pierre, I think, but am not certain of her name. There were two nuns by this name. I had known her as a novice with me. She had been a novice about two years and a half before I became one. She was rather large without being tall, and had rather dark hair and eyes. She disappeared unaccountably, and nothing was said of her except what I heard in whispers from a few of the nuns, as we found moments when we could speak unobserved.

Some told me they thought she must have left the Convent; and I might have supposed so, had I not some time afterwards found some of her things lying about, which she would, in such a case, doubtless have taken with her. I had never known anything more of her than what I could observe or conjecture. I had always, however, the idea that her parents or friends were wealthy, for she sometimes received clothes and other things which were very rich.

Another nun named St. Paul, died suddenly, but as in other cases, we knew so little, or rather were so entirely ignorant of the cause and circumstances, that we could only conjecture; and being forbidden to speak freely upon that or any other subject, thought little about it. I have mentioned that a number of veiled nuns thus mysteriously disappeared during my residence among them. I cannot perhaps recall them all, but I am confident there were as many as five, and I think more. All that we knew in such cases was, that one of our number who appeared as usual when last observed, was nowhere to be seen, and never seen again.—Mad Jane Ray, on several such occasions, would indulge in her bold, and, as we thought, dangerous remarks. She had intimated that some of those, who had been for some time in the Convent, were by some means removed to make room for new ones; and it was generally the fact, that the disappearance of one and the introduction of another into our community, were nearly at the same time. I have repeatedly heard Jane Ray say, with one of her significant looks, "When you appear, somebody else disappears!"

It is unpleasant enough to distress or torture one's self; but there is something worse in being tormented by others, especially when they resort to force, and show a pleasure in compelling you, and leave you no hope to escape, or opportunity to resist. I had seen the gags repeatedly in use, and sometimes applied with a roughness which seemed rather inhuman; but it is one thing to see and another thing to feel. They were ready to recommend a resort to compulsory measures, and ever ready to run for the gags. These were kept in one of the community-rooms, in a drawer between two closets; and there a stock of about fifty of them were always kept in deposit. Sometimes a number of nuns would prove refractory at a time; and I have seen battles commenced in which several appeared on both sides. The disobedient were, however, soon overpowered; and to prevent their screams being heard beyond the walls, gagging commenced immediately. I have seen half a dozen lying gagged and bound at once.

I have been subjected to the same state of involuntary silence more than once; for sometimes I became excited to a state of desperation by the measures used against me, and then conducted myself in a manner perhaps not less violent than some others. My hands have been tied behind me, and a gag put into my mouth, sometimes with such force and rudeness as to separate my lips, and cause the blood to flow freely.

Treatment of this kind is apt to teach submission; and many times I have acquiesced under orders received, or wishes expressed, with a fear of a recurrence to some severe measures.

One day I had incurred the anger of the Superior in a greater degree than usual, and it was ordered that I should be taken to one of the cells. I was taken by some of the nuns, bound and gagged, carried down the stairs into the cellar, and laid upon the floor. Not long afterwards I induced one of the nuns to request the Superior to come down and see me; and on making some acknowledgment, I was released. I will, however, relate this story rather more in detail.

On that day I had been engaged with Jane Ray, in carrying into effect a plan of revenge upon another person, when I fell under the vindictive spirit of some of the old nuns, and suffered severely. The Superior ordered me to the cells, and a scene of violence commenced which I will not attempt to describe, nor the precise circumstances which led to it. Suffice it to say, that after I had exhausted all my strength, by resisting as long as I could, against several nuns, I had my hands drawn behind my back, a leathern band passed first round my thumbs, then round my hands, and then round my waist and fastened. This was drawn so tight that it cut through the flesh of my thumbs, making wounds, the scars of which still remain. A gag was then forced into my mouth, not indeed so violently as it sometimes was, but roughly enough; after which I was taken by main force, and carried down into the cellar, across it almost to the opposite extremity, and brought to the last of the second range of cells on the left hand. The door was opened, and I was thrown in with violence, and left alone, the door being immediately closed, and bolted on the outside. The bare ground was under me, cold and hard as if it had been beaten even. I lay still in the position in which I had fallen, as it would have been difficult for me to move, confined as I was, and exhausted by my exertions; and the shock of my fall, and my wretched state of desperation and fear, disinclined me from any further attempt. I was in almost total darkness, there being nothing perceptible except a slight glimmer of light which came in through the little window far above me.

How long I remained in that condition I can only conjecture. It seemed to me a long time, and must have been two or three hours. I did not move, expecting to die there, and in a state of distress which I cannot describe, from the tight bondage about my hands, and the gag holding my jaws apart at their greatest extention. I am confident I must have died before morning, if, as I then expected, I had been left there all night. By-and-bye, however, the bolt was drawn, the door opened, and Jane Ray spoke to me in a tone of kindness.

She had taken an opportunity to slip into the cellar unnoticed, on purpose to see me. She unbound the gag, took it out of my mouth, and told me, she would do any thing to get me out of the dungeon. If she had had the bringing of me down she would not have thrust me in so brutally, and she would be resented on those who had. She offered to throw herself upon her knees before the Superior, and beg her forgiveness. To this I would not consent; but told her to ask the Superior to come to me, as I wished to speak to her. This I had no idea she would condescend to do; but Jane had not been gone long before the Superior came, and asked if I repented in the sight of God for what I had done. I replied in the affirmative; and after a lecture of some length on the pain I had given the Virgin Mary by my conduct, she asked whether I was willing to ask pardon of all the nuns for the scandal I had caused them by my behaviour. To this I made no objection; and I was then released from my prison and my bonds, went up to the community-room, and kneeling before all the sisters in succession, begged the forgiveness and prayers of each.

Among the marks which I still bear of the wounds received from penances and violence, are the scars left by the belt with which I repeatedly tortured myself, for the mortification of my spirit. These are most distinct on my side: for although the band, which was four or five inches in breadth, and extended round the waist, was stuck full of sharp iron points in all parts, it was sometimes crowded most against my side, by resting in my chair, and then the wounds were usually deeper there than anywhere else.

My thumbs were several times cut severely by the tight drawing of the band used to confine my arms; and scars are still visible upon them.

The rough gagging which I several times endured wounded my lips very much; for it was common, in that operation, to thrust the gag hard against the teeth, and catch one or both the lips, which were sometimes cruelly cut. The object was to stop the screams made by the offender, as soon as possible; and some of the old nuns delighted in tormenting us. A gag was once forced into my mouth, which had a large splinter upon it; and this cut through my under lip, in front, leaving to this day a scar about half an inch long. The same lip was several times wounded as well as the other; but one day worse than ever, when a narrow piece was cut off from the left side of it, by being pinched between the gag and the under fore-teeth; and this has left an inequality in it which is still very observable.

One of the most shocking stories I heard, of events that occurred in the nunnery before my acquaintance with it, was the following, which was told me by Jane Ray. What is uncommon, I can fix the date when I heard it. It was on New Year's Day, 1834. The ceremonies, customary in the early part of that day, had been performed; after mass, in the morning, the Superior had shaken hands with all the nuns, and given us her blessing, for she was said to have received power from heaven to do so once a year, and then on the first day of the year. Besides this, cakes, raisins, &c., are distributed to the nuns on that day.

While in the community-room, I had taken a seat just within the cupboard-door, where I often found a partial shelter from observation with Jane, when a conversation incidentally began between us. Our practice often was, to take places there beside one of the old nuns, awaiting the time when she would go away for a little while, and leave us partially screened from the observation of others. On that occasion, Jane and I were left for a time alone; when, after some discourse on suicide, she remarked that three nuns once killed themselves in the Convent. This happened, she said, not long after her reception, and I knew, therefore, that it was several years before I had become a novice. Three young ladies, she informed me, took the veil together, or very near the same time, I am not certain which. I know they have four robes in the Convent, to be worn during the ceremony of taking the veil: but I never have seen more than one of them used at a time.

Two of the new nuns were sisters, and the other their cousin. They had been received but a few days, when information was given one morning, that they had been found dead in their beds, amid a profusion of blood. Jane Ray said she saw their corpses, and that they appeared to have killed themselves by opening veins in their arms with a knife they had obtained, and all had bled to death together. What was extraordinary, Jane Ray added, that she had heard no noise, and she believed nobody had suspected that anything was wrong during the night. St. Hypolite, however, had stated, that she had found them in the morning, after the other nuns had gone to prayers, lying lifeless in their beds.

For some reason or other, their death was not made public; but their bodies, instead of being exhibited in full dress, in the chapel, and afterwards interred with solemnity beneath it, were taken unceremoniously into the cellar, and thrown into the hole I have so often mentioned.

There were a few instances, and only a few, in which we knew anything that was happening in the world; and even then our knowledge did not extend out of the city. I can recall but three occasions of this kind. Two of them were when the cholera prevailed in Montreal; and the other was the election riots. The appearance of the cholera, in both seasons of its ravages, gave us abundance of occupation. Indeed, we were more borne down by hard labour at those times, than ever before or afterwards during my stay. The Pope had given early notice that the burning of wax candles would afford protection from the disease, because, so long as any person continued to burn one, the Virgin Mary would intercede for him. No sooner, therefore, had the alarming disease made its appearance in Montreal, than a long wax candle was lighted in the Convent, for each of the inmates, so that all parts of it in use were artificially illuminated day and night. Thus a great many candles were constantly burning, which were to be replaced from those manufactured by the nuns. But this was a trifle. The Pope's message having been promulgated in the Grey Nunnery, and to Catholics at large through the pulpit, an extraordinary demand was created for wax candles, to supply which we were principally depended upon. All who could possibly be employed in making them were, therefore, set to work, and I, among the rest, assisted in different departments, and witnessed all.

Numbers of the nuns had long been familiar with the business; for a very considerable amount of wax had been annually manufactured in the Convent; but now the works were much extended, and other occupations in a great degree laid aside. Large quantities of wax were received in the building, which was said to have been imported from England; kettles were placed in some of the working-rooms, in which it was clarified by heat over coal fires, and, when prepared, the process of dipping commenced. The wicks, which were quite long, were placed, hanging upon a reel, taken up and dipped in succession, until after many slow revolutions of the reel, the candles were of the proper size. They were then taken to a part of the room where tables were prepared for rolling them smooth. This is done by passing a roller over them, until they became even and polished; after which they are laid by for sale. These processes caused a constant bustle in several of the rooms; and the melancholy reports from without, of the ravages of the cholera, with the uncertainty of what might be the result with us, notwithstanding the promised intercession of the Virgin, and the brilliant lights constantly burning in such numbers around us, impressed the scenes I used to witness very deeply on my mind. I had very little doubt, myself, of the strict truth of the story we had heard about the security conferred upon those who burnt candles, and yet I sometimes had serious fears arise in my mind. These thoughts, however, I did my utmost to regard as great sins, and evidences of my own want of faith.

It was during that period that I formed a partial acquaintance with several Grey Nuns, who used to come frequently for supplies of candles for their Convent. I had no opportunity to converse with them, except so far as the purchase and sale of the articles they required. I became familiar with their countenances and appearances, but was unable to judge of their characters or feelings. Concerning the rules and habits prevailing in the Grey Nunnery, I therefore remained as ignorant as if I had been a thousand miles off; and they had no better opportunity to learn anything of us, beyond what they could see around them in the room where the candles were sold.

We supplied the Congregational Nunnery also with wax candles, as I before remarked; and in both these institutions, it was understood, a constant illumination was kept up. Citizens were also frequently running in to buy candles in great and small quantities, so that the business of store-keeping was far more laborious than common.

We were confirmed in our faith in the intercession of the Virgin, when we found that we remained safe from the cholera; and it is a remarkable fact, that not one case of that disease existed in the Nunnery, during either of the seasons in which it proved so fatal in the city.

When the election riots prevailed at Montreal, the city was thrown into general alarm; we heard some reports from day to day, which made us anxious for ourselves. Nothing, however, gave me any serious thoughts, until I saw uncommon movements in some parts of the Nunnery, and ascertained, to my own satisfaction, that there was a large quantity of gunpowder stored in some secret place within the walls, and that some of it was removed, or prepared for use, under the direction of the Superior.

Penances.—I have mentioned several penances in different parts of this narration, which we sometimes had to perform. There is a great variety of them; and, while some, though trifling in appearance, became very painful, by long endurance or frequent repetition, others are severe in their nature, and never would be submitted to, unless, through fear of something worse, or a real belief in their efficacy to remove guilt. I will mention here such as I recollect, which can be named without offending a virtuous ear; for some there were, which, although I have been compelled to submit to, either by a misled conscience, or the fear of severe punishment, now that I am better able to judge of my duties, and at liberty to act, I would not mention or describe.

Kissing the floor is a very common penance; kneeling and kissing the feet of the other nuns is another; as are kneeling on hard peas, and walking with them in the shoes. We had repeatedly to walk on our knees through the subterranean passage, leading to the Congregational Nunnery; and sometimes to eat our meals with a rope round our necks. Sometimes we were fed only with such things as we most disliked. Garlic was given to me on this account, because I had a strong antipathy against it.

Eels were repeatedly given some of us, because we felt an unconquerable repugnance to them, on account of reports we heard of their feeding on dead carcases in the river St. Lawrence. It was no uncommon thing for us to be required to drink the water in which the Superior had washed her feet. Sometimes we were required to brand ourselves with a hot iron, so as to leave scars; at other times, to whip our naked flesh with several small rods, before a private altar, until we drew blood. I can assert, with the perfect knowledge of the fact, that many of the nuns bear the scars of these wounds.

One of the penances was to stand for a length of time with our arms extended, in imitation of the Saviour on the Cross. The *Chemin de la croix*, or Road to the Cross, is, in fact, a penance, though it consists of a variety of prostrations, with the repetition of many prayers, occupying two or three hours. This we had to perform frequently going in chapel, and falling before each chapelle in succession, at each time commemorating some particular act or circumstance reported of the Saviour's progress to the place of his crucifixion. Sometimes we were obliged to sleep on the floor in the winter, with nothing over us but a single sheet; and sometimes to chew a piece of window glass to a fine powder, in the presence of the Superior.

We had sometimes to wear a leathern belt stuck full of sharp metallic points, round our waists and the upper part of our arms, bound on so tight that they penetrated the flesh, and drew blood.

Some of the penances were so severe, that they seemed too much to be endured: and when they were imposed, the nuns who were to suffer them showed the most violent repugnance. They would often resist, and still oftener express their opposition by exclamations and screams.

Never, however, was any noise heard from them for a long time, for there was a remedy always ready to be applied in cases of the kind. The gag which was put into the mouth of the unfortunate Saint Frances, had been brought from a place where there were forty or fifty others of different shapes and sizes. These I have seen in their depository, which is a drawer between two closets, in one of the community-rooms. Whenever any loud noise was made, one of these instruments was demanded, and gagging commenced at once. I have known many instances, and sometimes five or six nuns gagged at once. Sometimes they would become so much excited before they could be bound and gagged, that considerable force was necessary to be exerted; and I have seen the blood flowing from mouths into which the gag had been thrust with violence.

Indeed I ought to know something of this department of nunnery discipline; I have had it tried upon myself, and can bear witness that it is not only most humiliating and oppressive, but often extremely painful. The mouth is kept forced open, and the straining of the jaws at their utmost stretch, for a considerable time, is very distressing.

One of the worst punishments which I ever saw inflicted, was that with the cap; and yet some of the old nuns were permitted to inflict it at their pleasure. I have repeatedly known them to go for a cap, when one of our number had transgressed a rule, sometimes though it were a very unimportant one. These caps were kept in a cupboard in the old nuns' room, whence they were brought when wanted.

They were small, made of a reddish looking leather, fitted closely to the head, and fastened under the chin with a kind of buckle. It was the common practice to tie the nun's hands behind, and gag her before the cap was put on, to prevent noise and resistance. I never saw it worn by any one for a moment, without throwing them into severe sufferings. If permitted, they would scream in the most shocking manner, and always writhed as much as their confinement would allow. I can speak from personal knowledge of this punishment, as I have endured it more than once; and yet I have no idea of the cause of the pain. I never examined one of the caps, nor saw the inside, for they are always brought and taken away quickly; but although the first sensation was that of coolness, it was hardly put on my head before a violent and indiscribable sensation began, like that of a blister, only much more insupportable: and this continued until it was removed. It would produce such an acute pain as to throw us into convulsions, and I think no human being could endure it for an hour. After this punishment, we felt its effect through the system for many days. Having once known what it was by experience, I held the cap in dread, and whenever I was condemned to suffer the punishment again, felt ready to do any thing to avoid it. But when tied and gagged, with the cap on my head again, I could only sink upon the floor, and roll about in anguish until it was taken off.

This was usually done in about ten minutes, sometimes less, but the pain always continued in my head for several days. I thought that it might take away a person's reason if kept on a much longer time. If I had not been gagged, I am sure I should have uttered awful screams. I have felt the effects for a week. Sometimes fresh cabbage leaves were applied to my head to remove it. Having had no opportunity to examine my head, I connot say more.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The punishment of the Cap—The priests of the district of Montreal have free access to the Black Nunnery—Crimes committed and required by them—The Pope's command to commit indecent crimes—Characters of the old and new Superiors—The timidity of the latter—I began to be employed in the hospitals—Some account of them—Warning given me by a sick nun—Penance of hanging.

THIS punishment was occasionally resorted to for very trifling offences, such as washing the hands without permission; and it was generally applied on the spot, and before the other nuns in community-room.

I have mentioned before, that the country, so far down as the Three Rivers, is furnished with priests by the Seminary of Montreal; and that these hundred and fifty men are liable to be occasionally transferred from one station to another. Numbers of them are often to be seen in the streets of Montreal, as they may find a home in the Seminary.

They are considered as having an equal right to enter the Black Nunnery whenever they please; and then, according to our oaths, they have complete control over the nuns. To name all the works of shame of which they are guilty in that retreat, would require much time and space, neither would it be necessary to the accomplishment of my object, which is, the publication of but some of their criminality to the world, and the development, in general terms, of scenes thus far carried on in secret within the walls of that Convent, where I was so long an inmate.

Secure against detection by the world, they never believed that an eye-witness would ever escape to tell of their crimes, and declare some of their names before the world; but the time has come, and some of their deeds of darkness must come to the day. I have seen in the Nunnery, the priests from more, I presume, than a hundred country places, admitted for shameful and criminal purposes; from St. Charles, St. Denis, St. Mark's, St. Antoine, Chambly, Bertier, St. John's, &c.

How unexpected to them will be the disclosures I make! Shut up in a place from which there has been thought to be but one way of egress, and that the passage to the grave, they considered themselves safe in perpetrating crimes in our presence, and in making us share in their criminality as often as they chose, and conducted more shamelessly than even the brutes.

These debauchées would come in without ceremony, concealing their names, both by night and day. Being within the walls of that prison-house of death, where the cries and pains of the injured innocence of their victims would never reach the world, for relief or redress for their wrongs, without remorse or shame, they would glory, not only in sating their brutal passions, but even in torturing, in the most barbarous manner, the feelings of those under their power; telling us at the same time, that this mortifying the flesh was religion, and pleasing to God. The more they could torture us, or make us violate our own feelings, the more pleasure they took in their unclean revelling; and all their brutal obscenity they called meritorious before God.

We were sometimes invited to put ourselves to voluntary sufferings in a variety of ways, not for a penance, but to show our devotion to God. A priest would sometimes say to us—

"Now, which of you have love enough for Jesus Christ to stick a pin through your cheeks?"

Some of us would signify our readiness, and immediately thrust one through up to the head. Sometimes he would propose that we should repeat the operation several times on the spot; and the cheeks of a number of the nuns would be bloody.

There were other acts occasionally proposed and consented to, which I cannot name in a book. Such the Superior would sometimes command us to perform; many of them, things not only useless and unheard of, but loathsome and indecent in the highest possible degree. How they ever could have been invented, I never could conceive. Things were done worse than the entire exposure of the person, though this was occasionally required of several at once in the presence of priests.

The Superior of the Seminary would sometimes come and inform us, that she had received orders from the Pope, to request that those nuns who possessed the greatest devotion and faith, should be requested to perform some particular deeds, which she named or described in our presence, but of which no decent or moral person could ever venture to speak. I cannot repeat what would injure any ear, not debased to the lowest possible degree. I am bound by a regard to truth, however, to confess, that deluded women were found among us, who would comply with their requests.

There was a great difference between the characters of our old and new Superiors, which soon became obvious. The former used to say she liked to walk, because it would prevent her from becoming corpulent. She was, therefore, very active, and constantly going about from one part of the Nunnery to another, overseeing us at our various employments. I never saw in her any appearance of timidity ; she seemed, on the contrary, bold and masculine, and sometimes much more than that, cruel and cold-blooded, in scenes calculated to overcome any common person. Such a character she had particularly exhibited at the murder of St. Frances.

The new Superior, on the other hand, was so heavy and lame, that she walked with much difficulty, and consequently exercised a less vigilant oversight of the nuns. She was also of a timid disposition, or else had been overcome by some great fright in her past life ; for she was apt to become alarmed in the night, and never liked to be alone in the dark. She had long performed the part of an old nun, which is that of a spy upon the younger ones, and was well known to us in that character, under the name of St. Margarite. Soon after her promotion to the station of Superior, she appointed me to sleep in her apartment, and assigned me a sofa to lie upon. One night, while I was asleep, she suddenly threw herself upon me, and exclaimed, in great alarm, "Oh! mon Dieu! mon Dieu! qu'estque ca ?" (Oh! my God! my God! what is that ?) I jumped up and looked about the room, but saw nothing, and endeavoured to convince her that there was nothing extraordinary there. But she insisted that a ghost had come and held her bed-curtain, so that she could not draw it. I examined it, and found that the curtain had been caught by a pin in the valence, which had held it back; but it was impossible to tranquilize her for some time. She insisted on my sleeping with her the rest of the night, and I stretched myself across the foot of her bed, and slept there till morning.

During the last part of my stay in the Convent, I was often employed in attending in the hospitals. There are, as I have before mentioned, several apartments devoted to the sick, and there is a physician of Montreal, who attends as physician to the Convent. It must not be supposed, however, that he knows anything concerning the private hospitals. It is a fact of great importance to be distinctly understood, and constantly borne in mind, that he is never, under any circumstances, admitted into the private hospital-rooms. Of those he sees nothing more than any stranger whatever. He is limited to the care of those patients who are admitted from the city into the public hospital, and one of the nuns' hospitals, and these he visits every day. Sick poor are received for charity by the institution, attended by some of the nuns, and often go away with the highest ideas of our charitable characters and holy lives. The physician himself might, perhaps, in some cases, share in the delusion.

I frequently followed Dr. Nelson through the public hospital at the direction of the Superior, with pen, ink, and paper, in my hands, and wrote down the prescriptions which he ordered for the different patients. These were afterwards prepared and administered by the attendants. About a year before I left the Convent, I was first appointed to attend the private sick-rooms, and was frequently employed in that duty up to the day of my departure. Of course, I had opportunities to observe the nunber and classes of patients treated there; and in what I am to say on the subject, I appeal, with perfect confidence, to any true and competent witness to confirm my words, whenever such a witness may appear. It would be vain for any body who has merely visited the Convent from curiosity, or resided in it as a novice, to question my declarations. Such a person must necessarily be ignorant of even the existence of the private rooms, unless informed by some one else. Such rooms, however, there are, and I could relate many things which have passed there during the hours I was employed in them, as I have stated.

One night I was called to sit up with an old nun, named St. Clare, who, in going down stairs, had dislocated a limb, and lay in a sick-room adjoining the hospital. She seemed to be a little out of her head a part of the time, but appeared to be quite in possession of her reason most of the night. It was easy to pretend that she was delirious; but I considered her as speaking the truth, though I felt reluctant to repeat what I heard her say, and excused myself from mentioning it even at confession, on the ground that the Superior thought her deranged.

What led her to some of the most remarkable parts of her conversation was, a motion I made, in the course of the night, to take the light out of her little room into the adjoining apartment, to look once more at the sick persons there. She begged me not to leave her a moment in the dark, for she could not bear it. "I have witnessed so many horrid scenes," said she, "in this Convent, that I want somebody near me constantly, and must always have a light burning in my room. I cannot tell you," she added, "what things I remember, for they would frighten you too much. What you have seen are nothing to them. Many a murder have I witnessed; many a nice young creature has been killed in this Nunnery. I advise you to be very cautious—keep everything to yourself—there are many here ready to betray you."

What it was that induced the old nun to express so much kindness to me I could not tell, unless she was frightened at the recollection of her own crimes, and those of others, and felt grateful for the care I took of her. She had been one of the night watches, and never before showed me any particular kindness. She did not indeed go into detail concerning the transactions to which she alluded, but told me that some nuns had been murdered under great aggravations of cruelty, by being gagged, and left to starve in the cells, or having their flesh burned off their bones with red hot irons.

It was uncommon to find compunction expressed by any of the nuns. Habit renders us insensible to the sufferings of others, and careless about our own sins. I had become so hardened myself, that I find it difficult to rid myself of many of my former false principles and views of right and wrong.

I was one day set to wash some empty bottles from the cellar, which had contained the liquid that was poured into the cemetery there. A number of these had been brought from the corner where so many of them were always to be seen, and placed at the head of the cellar stairs, and there we were required to take them and wash them out. We poured in water and rinsed them ; a few drops which got upon our clothes soon made holes in them. I think the liquid was called vitriol, or some such name, and I heard some persons say that it would soon destroy the flesh and even the bones of the dead. At another time, we were furnished with a little of the liquid, which was mixed with a quantity of water, and used in dying some cloth black, which was wanted at funerals in the chapel. Our hands were turned very black by being dipped in it, but a few drops of some other liquid were mixed with fresh water, and given us to wash in, which left our skin of a bright red.

The bottles of which I spoke were made of very thick dark-coloured glass, large at the bottom, and, I should say, held something less than a gallon.

I was once much shocked, on entering the room for the examination of conscience, at seeing a nun hanging by a cord from a ring in the ceiling, with her head downward. Her clothes had been tied round with a leathern strap, to keep them in their place, and then she had been fastened in that situation, with her head some distance from the floor. Her face had a very unpleasant appearance, being dark coloured, and swollen by the rushing in of the blood ; her hands were tied, and her mouth stopped with a large gag. This nun proved to be no other than Jane Ray, who for some fault had been condemned to this punishment.

This was not, however, a solitary case ; I heard of numbers who were "hung," as it was called, at different times ; and I saw St. Hypolite and St. Luke undergoing it. This was considered a most distressing punishment ; and it was the only one which Jane Ray could not endure, of all she had tried.

Some of the nuns would allude to it in her presence, but it usually made her angry. It was probably practised in the same place while I was a novice, but I never heard or thought of such a thing in those days. Whenever we wished to enter the room for the examination of conscience, we had to ask leave, and, after some delay, were permitted to go, but always under a strict charge to bend the head forward, and keep the eyes fixed upon the floor.

CHAPTER XIX.

More visits to the imprisoned nuns—Their fears—Others temporarily put into the cells—Relics—The Agnus Dei—The priests' private hospital, or Holy Retreat—Secret rooms in the eastern wing—Reports of murders in the convent—The Superior's private records—Number of nuns in the convent—Desire of escape—Urgent reason for it—Plan—Deliberation—Attempt—Success.

I OFTEN seized an opportunity, when I safely could, to speak a cheering or friendly word to one of the poor prisoners, in passing their cells, on my errands in the cellars. For a time I supposed them to be sisters ; but I afterwards discovered that this was not the case. I found that they were always under the fear of suffering some punishment, in case they should be found talking with a person not commissioned to attend them. They would often ask, "Is not somebody coming?"

I could easily believe what I heard affirmed by others, that fear was the severest of their sufferings. Confined in the dark, in so gloomy a place, with the long arched cellar stretching off this way and that, visited only now and then by a solitary nun, with whom they were afraid to speak their feelings, and with only the miserable society of each other; how gloomy thus to spend day after day, months, and even years, without any prospect of liberation, and liable at any moment to another fate to which the Bishop or Superior might condemn them. But these poor creatures must have known something of the horrors perpetrated in other parts of the building, and could not have been ignorant of the hole in the cellar, which was not far from the cells, and the use to which it was devoted. One of them told me, in confidence, she wished they could get out. They must also have been often disturbed in their sleep, if they ever did sleep, by the numerous priests who passed through the trap-door at no great distance. To be subject to such trials for a single day would be dreadful; but these nuns had them to endure for years.

I often felt much compassion for them, and wished to see them released; but at other times, yielding to the doctrine perpetually taught us in the Convent, that our future happiness would be proportioned to the sufferings we had to undergo in this world, I would rest satisfied that their imprisonment was a real blessing to them.

Others, I presume, participated with me in such feelings. One Sunday afternoon, after we had performed all our ceremonies, and were engaged as usual, at that time, with backgammon and other amusements, one of the young nuns exclaimed, "Oh! how headstrong are those wretches in the cells, they are as bad as the day they were put in!"

This exclamation was made, as I supposed, in consequence of some recent conversation with them, as I knew her to be particularly acquainted with the older one.

Some of the vacant cells were occasionally used for temporary imprisonment. Three nuns were confined in them, to my knowledge, for disobedience to the Superior, as she called it. They did not join the rest in singing in the evening, being exhausted in the various exertions of the day. The Superior ordered them to sing; and, as they did not comply, after the command had been twice repeated, she ordered them away to the cells.

They were immediately taken down into the cellar, placed in separate dungeons, and the door shut and barred upon them. There they remained through the night, the following day and second night, but were released in time to attend mass on the second morning.

The Superior used occasionally to show something in a glass box, which we were required to regard with the highest degree of reverence. It was made of wax, and called an Agnus Dei. She used to exhibit it to us when we were in a state of grace; that is, after confesssion and before Sacrament. She said it had been blessed *in the very dish in which our Saviour had eaten.* It was brought from Rome. Every time we kissed it, or even looked at it, we were told it gave a hundred days' release from purgatory to ourselves, or if we did not need it, to our next of kin in purgatory, if not a Protestant. If we had no such kinsman, the benefit was to go to the souls in purgatory not prayed for.

Jane Ray would sometimes say to me, "Let's kiss it—some of our friends will thank us for it."

I have been repeatedly employed in carrying dainties of different kinds into the little private room I have mentioned, next beyond the Superior's sitting-room, in the second story, which the priests made their "*Holy Retreat.*" That room I never was allowed to enter. I could only go to the door with a waiter of refreshments, set it down upon a little stand near it, give three raps on the door, and then retire to a distance to await orders. When anything was to be taken away, it was placed on the stand by the Superior, who then gave three raps for me, and closed the door.

The Bishop I saw at least once, when he appeared worse for wine, or something of the kind. After partaking of refreshments in the Convent, he sent for all the nuns, and on our appearance, gave us his blessing, and put a piece of pound cake on the shoulder of each of us, in a manner which appeared singular and foolish.

There are three rooms in the Black Nunnery, which I never entered. I had enjoyed much liberty, and had seen, as I supposed, all parts of the building, when one day I observed an old nun go to a corner of an apartment near the northern end of the western wing, push the end of her scissors into a crack in the panelled wall, and pull out a door. I was much surprised, because I never had conjectured that any door was there; and it appeared, when I afterwards examined the place, that no indication of it could be discovered on the closest scrutiny. I stepped forward to see what was within, and saw three rooms opening into each other; but the nun refused to admit me within the door, which she said led to rooms kept as depositories.

She herself entered and closed the door, so that I could not satisfy my curiosity; and no occasion presented itself. I always had a strong desire to know the use of these apartments; for I am sure they must have been designed for some purpose of which I was intentionally kept ignorant, otherwise they never would have remained unknown to me so long. Besides, the old nun evidently had some strong reason for denying me admission, though she endeavoured to quiet my curiosity.

The Superior, after my admission into the Convent, had told me I had access to every room in the building; and I had seen places which bore witness to the cruelties and the crimes committed under her commands or sanction; but here was a succession of rooms which had been concealed from me, and so constructed as if designed to be unknown to all but a few. I am sure that any person, who might be able to examine the wall in that place, would pronounce that secret door a surprising piece of work. I never saw anything of the kind which appeared to me so ingenious and skilfully made. I told Jane Ray what I had seen, and she said at once, "We will get in and see what is there." But I suppose she never found an opportunity.

I naturally felt a good deal of curiosity to learn whether such scenes, as I had witnessed in the death of Saint Frances, were common or rare, and took an opportunity to inquire of Jane Ray. Her reply was—

"Oh, yes; and there were many murdered while you were a novice, whom you heard nothing about."

This was all I ever learnt on this subject; but although I was told nothing of the manner in which they were killed, I suppose it to be the same which I had seen practised, namely, by smothering.

I went into the Superior's parlour one day for something, and found Jane Ray there alone, looking into a book with an appearance of interest. I asked her what it was, but she made some trifling answer, and laid it by as if unwilling to let me take it. There are two bookcases in the room; one on the right as you enter the door, and the other opposite, near the window and the sofa. The former contains the lecture-books and other printed volumes, the latter seemed to be filled with note and account books. I have often seen the keys in the bookcases while I have been dusting the furniture, and sometimes observed letters stuck up in the room; although I never looked into one, or thought of doing so. We were under strict orders not to touch any of them, and the idea of sins and penances was always present in my mind.

Some time after the occasion mentioned, I was sent into the Superior's room with Jane, to arrange it; and as the same book was lying out of the case, she said, "Come let us look into it." I immediately consented, and we opened it, and turned over several leaves. It was about a foot and a half long, as nearly as I can remember, a foot wide, and about two inches thick, though I cannot speak with particular precision, as Jane frightened me almost as soon as I touched it, by exclaiming, "There, you have looked into it, and if you tell of me, I will of you."

The thought of being subjected to a severe penance, which I had reason to apprehend, fluttered me very much; and, although I tried to cover my fears, I did not succeed very well. I reflected, however, that the sin was already committed, and that it would not be increased if I examined the book.

I therefore looked a little at several pages, though I still felt a good deal of agitation. I saw at once that the volume was a record of the entrance of nuns and novices into the Convent, and of the births that had taken place in the Convent. Entries of the last description were made in a brief manner, on the following plan: I do not give the names or dates as real, but only to show the form of entering them.

Saint Mary, delivered of a son, March 16, 1834.
Saint Clarice „ daughter, April 2.
Saint Matilda „ daughter, April 30, &c.

No mention was made in the book of the death of the children, though I well knew not one of them could be living at that time.

Now I presume that the period the book embraced was about two years, as several names near the beginning I knew; but I can form only a rough conjecture of the number of infants born, and murdered, of course, records of which it contained. I suppose the book contained at least one hundred pages, and one fourth were written upon, and that each page contained fifteen distinct records. Several pages were devoted to the list of births. On this supposition there must have been a large number, which I can easily believe to have been born there in the course of two years.

What were the contents of the other books belonging to the same case with that which I had looked into, I have no idea, having never dared to touch one of them; I believe, however, that Jane Ray was well acquainted with them, knowing, as I do, her intelligence and prying disposition. If she could be brought to give her testimony, she would doubtless unfold many curious particulars now unknown.

I am able, in consequence of a circumstance which appeared accidental, to state with confidence the exact number of persons in the Convent one day of the week in which I left it. This may be a point of some interest, as several deaths had occurred since my taking the veil, and many burials had been openly made in the chapel.

I was appointed, at the time mentioned, to lay out the covers for all the inmates of the Convent, including the nuns in the cells. These covers, as I have said before, were linen bands, to be bound around the knives, forks, spoons, and napkins, for eating. These were for all the nuns and novices, and amounted to two hundred and ten. As the number of novices was then about thirty, I know that there must have been at that time about one hundred and eighty veiled nuns.

I was occasionally troubled with a desire of escaping from the Nunnery, and was much distressed whenever I felt so evil an imagination rise in my mind. I believed that it was a sin, a great sin, and did not fail to confess, at every opportunity, that I felt discontent. My confessors informed me that I was beset with evil spirits, and urged me to pray against it. Still, however, every now and then, I would think, "Oh, if I could get out."

At length one of the priests to whom I had confessed this sin, informed me, for my comfort, that he had begun to pray to Saint Anthony, and hoped his intercession would, by-and-by, drive away the evil spirit. My desire of escape was partly excited by the fear of bringing an infant to the murderous hands of my companions, or of taking a potion whose violent effects I too well knew.

One evening, however, I found myself more filled with a desire of escape than ever; and what exertions I made to dismiss the thought proved entirely unavailing. During evening prayers, I became quite occupied with it; and when the time of meditation arrived, instead of falling into a doze, as I often did, though I was a good deal fatigued, I found no difficulty in keeping awake. When this exercise was over, and the other nuns were about to retire to the sleeping room, my station being in the private sick-room for the night, I withdrew to my post, which was the little sitting room adjoining it.

Here, then, I threw myself upon the sofa, and being alone, reflected a few moments on the manner of escaping which had occurred to me. The physician had arrived a little before, at half-past eight; and I had now to accompany him as usual from bed to bed, with pen, ink, and paper, to write down his prescriptions for the direction of the old nun, who was to see them administered.

What I wrote on that evening, I cannot now recollect, as my mind was uncommonly agitated; but my customary way was to note down briefly his orders, in this manner—

1 d. salts, St. Matilde.
1 blister, St. Genevieve, &c.

I remember that I wrote these orders that evening, and then, having finished the rounds, I returned for a few moments to the sitting-room.

There were two ways of access to the street from those rooms; first, the more direct, from the passage adjoining the sick-room down stairs, through a door, into the Nunnery-yard, and through a wicker gate: that is the way by which the physician usually enters at night, and he is provided with a key for that purpose.

It would have been unsafe, however, for me to pass out that way, because a man is kept continually in the yard, near the gate, who sleeps at night in a small hut near the door, to escape whose observation would be impossible. My only hope, therefore, was, that I might gain my passage through the other way, to do which I must pass through the sick-room, then through a passage, or small room usually occupied by an old nun; another passage and staircase leading down to the yard, and a large gate opening into the cross street. I had no liberty to go beyond the sick-room, and knew that several of the doors might be fastened; still I determined to try; although I have often since been astonished at my boldness in undertaking what would expose me to so many hazards of failure, and to severe punishment if found out.

It seemed as if I acted under some extraordinary impulse, which encouraged me to what I should hardly at any other moment have thought of undertaking. I had sat but a short time upon the sofa, however, before I rose with a desperate determination to make the experiment. I therefore walked hastily across the sick room, passed into the nun's room, walked by her in a great hurry, and almost without giving her time to speak or think, said, "A message!" and in an instant was through the door, and in the next passage. I think there was another nun with her at the moment; and it is probable that my hurried manner, and prompt intimation that I was sent on a pressing mission to the Superior, prevented them from entertaining any suspicion of my intention. Besides, I had the written orders of the physician in my hand, which may have tended to mislead them; and it was well known to some of the nuns, that I had twice left the Convent, and returned from choice, so that I was probably more likely to be trusted to remain than many of the others.

The passage which I now reached had several doors, with all which I was acquainted; that on the opposite side opened into a community-room, where I should have probably found some of the old nuns at that hour, and they would certainly have stopped me. On the left, however, was a large door, both locked and barred: but I gave the door a sudden swing, that it might creak as little as possible, being of iron. Down the stairs I hurried, and making my way through the door into the yard, stepped across it, unbarred the great gate, and was at liberty!

CONCLUSION.

The following circumstances comprise all that is deemed necessary now to subjoin to the preceding narrative.

After my arrival in New York, I was introduced to the almshouse, where I was attended with kindness and care, and, as I hoped, was entirely unknown. But when I had been some time in that institution, I found that it was reported that I was a fugitive nun; and not long after, an Irish woman, belonging to the house, brought me a secret message, which caused me some agitation.

I was sitting in the room of Mrs. Johnson, the matron, engaged in sewing, when that Irish woman, employed in the institution, came in and told me that Mr. Conroy was below, and had sent to see me. I was informed that he was a Roman priest, who often visited the house, and he had a particular wish to see me at that time; having come, as I believe, expressly for that purpose. I showed unwillingness to comply with such an invitation, and did not go.

The woman told me, further, that he sent me word that I need not think to avoid him, for it would be impossible for me to do so, I might conceal myself as well as I could, but I should be found and taken. No matter where I went, or what hiding-place I might choose, I should be known; and I had better come at once. He knew who I was; and he was authorized to take me to the Sisters of Charity, if I should prefer to join them. He would promise that I might stay with them if I chose, and be permitted to remain in New York. He sent me word further that he had received full power and authority over me from the Superior of the Hotel Dieu Nunnery at Montreal, and was able to do all that she could do; as her right to dispose of me at her will had been imparted to him by a regular writing received from Canada. This was alarming information for me, in the weakness in which I was at that time. The woman added, that the same authority had been given to all the priests; so that go where I might I should meet men informed about me and my escape, and fully empowered to seize me whenever they could, and convey me back to the Convent from which I had escaped.

Under these circumstances, it seemed to me that the offer to place me among the Sisters of Charity, with permission to remain in New York, was mild and favourable. However, I had resolution enough to refuse to see priest Conroy.

Not long afterwards I was informed, by the same messenger, that the priest was again in the building, and repeated his request. I desired one of the gentlemen connected with the institution, that a stop might be put to such messages, as I wished to receive no more of them. A short time after, however, the woman told me that Mr. Conroy wished to inquire of me, whether my name was not St. Eustace while a nun, and if I had not confessed to Priest Kelly in Montreal. I answered, that it was all true; for I had confessed to him a short time while in the Nunnery. I was then told again that the priest wanted to see me, and I sent back word that I would see him in the presence of Mr. T—— or Mr. S——; which, however, was not agreed to; and I was afterwards informed, that Mr. Conroy, the Roman priest, spent an hour in the room and a passage where I had frequently been; but, through the mercy of God, I was employed at another place at that time, and had no occasion to go where I should have met him. I afterwards repeatedly heard, that Mr. Conroy continued to visit the house, and to ask for me; but I never saw him. I once had determined to leave the institution, and go to the Sisters of Charity; but circumstances occurred which gave me time for further reflection; and I was saved from the destruction to which I should have been exposed.

As the period of my accouchement approached, I sometimes thought that I should not survive it; and then the recollection of the dreadful crimes I had witnessed in the Nunnery would come upon me very powerfully, and I would think it a solemn duty to disclose them before I died. To have a knowledge of those things, and leave the world without making them known, appeared to me like a great sin, whenever I could divest myself of the impression made upon me by the declarations and arguments of the Superior, nuns, and priests, of the duty of submitting to everything, and the necessary holiness of whatever they did or required.

The evening but one before the period which I anticipated with so much anxiety, I was sitting alone, and began to indulge in reflections of this kind. It seemed to me that I must be near the close of my life, and I determined to make a disclosure at once. I spoke to Mrs. Ford, a woman whose character I respected, a nurse in the hospital, number twenty-three. I informed her that I had no expectation of living long, and had some things on my mind which I wished to communicate before it should be too late. I added, that I should prefer telling them to Mr. T——, the chaplain! of which she approved, as she considered it a duty to do so, under those circumstances. I had no opportunity, however, to converse with Mr. T. at that time, and, probably, my purpose of disclosing the facts already given in this book, would never have been executed, but for what subsequently took place.

It was alarm which led me to form such a determination; and when the period of trial had been safely passed, and I had a prospect of recovery, anything appeared to me more unlikely than that I should make this exposure.

I was then a Roman Catholic, at least a great part of my time; and my conduct, in a great measure, was according to the faith and motives of a Roman Catholic. Notwithstanding what I knew of the conduct of so many of the priests and nuns, I thought that it had no effect on the sanctity of the church, or the authority or effects of the acts performed by the former at the mass, confession, &c. I had such a regard for my vows as a nun, that I considered my hand as well as my heart irrevocably given to Jesus Christ, and could never have allowed any person to take it. Indeed, to this day, I feel an instinctive aversion to offering my hand, or taking the hand of another person, even as an expression of friendship.

I also thought that I might soon return to the Catholics, although fear and disgust held me back. I had now that infant to think for, whose life I had happily saved by my timely escape from the Nunnery; what its fate might be, in case it should ever fall into the power of the priests, I could not tell.

I had, however, reason for alarm. Would a child, destined to destruction, like the infants I had seen baptized and smothered, be allowed to go through the world unmolested, a living memorial of the truth of crimes long practised in security, because never exposed? What pledges could I get to satisfy me, that I, on whom her dependence must be, would be spared by those who, I had reason to think, were wishing then to sacrifice me? How could I trust the helpless infant in hands which had hastened the baptism of many such, in order to hurry them into the secret pit in the cellar? Could I suppose that *Father Phelan, Priest of the Parish Church of Montreal*, would see *his own child* growing up in the world, and feel willing to run the risk of having the truth exposed? What could I expect, especially from him, but the utmost rancour, and the most determined enmity, against the innocent child and its abused and defenceless mother?

Yet, my mind would sometimes still incline to the opposite direction, and indulge the thought, that perhaps the only way to secure heaven to us both, was to throw ourselves back into the hands of the church, to be treated as she pleased.—When, therefore, the fear of immediate death was removed, I renounced all thoughts of communicating the substance of the facts of this volume. It happened, however, that my danger was not passed. I was soon seized with very alarming symptoms; then my desire to disclose my story revived.

I had before had an opportunity to speak in private with the chaplain; but, as it was at a time when I supposed myself out of danger, I had deferred for three days my proposed communication, thinking that I might yet avoid it altogether. When my symptoms, however, became more alarming, I was anxious for Saturday to arrive, the day which I had appointed; and when I had not the opportunity, on that day, which I desired, I thought it might be too late. I did not see him till Monday, when my prospects of surviving were very gloomy, and I then informed him that I wished to communicate to him a few secrets, which were likely otherwise to die with me. I then told him, that while a nun, in the Convent of Montreal, I had witnessed the murder of a nun, called Saint Frances, and of at least one of the infants which I have spoken of in this book. I added some few circumstances, and I believe disclosed, in general terms, some of the crimes I knew of in that Nunnery.

My anticipations of death proved to be unfounded: for my health afterwards improved, and had I not made the confessions on that occasion, it is very possible I might never have made them. I, however, afterwards, felt more willing to listen to instruction, and experienced friendly attentions from some of the benevolent persons around me, who, taking an interest in me on account of my darkened understanding, furnished me with the Bible, and were ever ready to counsel me when I desired it.

I soon began to believe that God might have intended that his creatures should learn his will by reading his word, and taking upon them the free exercise of their reason, and acting under responsibility to him.

It is difficult for one who has never given way to such arguments and influences as those to which I had been exposed, to realize how hard it is to think aright, after thinking wrong. The Scriptures always affect me powerfully when I read them; but I feel that I have but just begun to learn the great truths, in which I ought to have been early and thoroughly instructed. I realize, in some degree, how it is, that the Scriptures render the people of the United States so strongly opposed to such doctrines as are taught in the Black and Congregational Nunneries of Montreal. The priests and nuns used often to declare that of all heretics, the children from the United States were the most difficult to be converted; and it was thought a great triumph when one of them was brought over to "the true faith." The first passage of Scripture that made any serious impression upon my mind, was the text on which the chaplain preached on the Sabbath after my introduction to the house,—"Search the Scriptures."

EXTRACTS FROM PUBLIC JOURNALS,

RELATIVE TO

THE TRUTH OF

MARIA MONK'S DISCLOSURES.

The following certificate appeared in the Protestant Vindicator, in March, 1836.

We, the subscribers, have an acquaintance with Miss Maria Monk, and having considered the evidence of different kinds which has been collected in relation to her case, have no hesitation in declaring our belief in the truth of the statements she makes in her book, recently published in New York, entitled 'Awful Disclosures,' &c.

"We at the same time declare that the assertion, originally made in the Roman Catholic Newspapers of Boston, that the book was copied from a work entitled 'The Gates of Hell Opened,' is wholly destitute of foundation; it being entirely new, and not copied from anything whatsoever.

"And we further declare, that no evidence has been produced which discredits the statements of Miss Monk; while, on the contrary, her story has yet received, and continues to receive, confirmation from various sources.

"During the last week, two important witnesses spontaneously appeared, and offered to give public testimony in her favour. From them the following delineations have been received. The first is an affidavit given by Mr. William Miller, now a resident of this city. The second is a statement received from a young married woman, who, with her husband, also resides here. In the clear and repeated statements made by these two witnesses, we place entire reliance; who are ready to furnish satisfaction to any persons making reasonable enquiries on the subject.

"W. C. Brownree,
"John J. Slocum,
"Andrew Bruce,
"D. Fanshaw,
"Amos Belden,
"David Wesson,
"Thomas Hogan."

From the American Protestant Vindicator.

"It was expected that, after Maria Monk's disclosures, an artful attempt would be made to invalidate her testimony—which was done secretly after her escape from the Hotel Dieu Nunnery, by so altering the appearance of that institution by planking, and bricking, and stoning, as to deceive Col. Stone, who was *then* requested to examine it for himself and the world. The Col. misrepresented what he saw, he was deceived regarding those alterations by the inmates, who dragged him, as it were, by force through the building during his examination, which was performed in the amazing short space of a few hours. But time is the grand unraveller of mysteries. On the appearance of the book of Miss Monk, the hoodwinked people of Montreal were so surprised and stupefied at finding that the immaculate purity of the Hotel Dieu had been so disparaged, that they *forgot* to think seriously on the subject—but, understanding that the story had gained almost general belief abroad, they, at last, were led to conjecture that perhaps it was partiality that prevented them from believing it at home. General attention, therefore, in Montreal, was directed towards that edifice—and those residing in its immediate vicinity cast a retrospective glance over what they had seen transacted there, between the time at which the 'Disclosures' were published, and the visit of Col. Stone. The result of this investigation has been lately given on the spot to the Rev. Jas. P. Miller, of New York, who visited that city for the purpose of hearing that the truth was gradually coming to light. The neighbours informed Mr. Miller that about the time it was rumoured that she had exposed the institution, a mysterious pile of planks, twenty-five feet in height, had been placed mysteriously in the yard, which were wonderfully and gradually used in progressing some improvements in the building—for they were neither employed outside nor hauled away.

Whatever may be the fact with regard to Maria Monk's alleged disclosures, those of our people who have read your papers, are satisfied in one point: that Mr. Stone's credibility as a witness as been successfully impeached; that his examination of the Nunnery, was a mere sham; that he was either the dupe of Jesuitical imposture, or that he himself is a fond impostor; that he has been unwillingly or ignorantly befooled; and unless he has had a tangible reward, that he has 'got his labour for his pains.'

"My wife, who spent her childhood in Montreal, says, that she and her schoolmates, when walking the street near the Nunnery, often used to wonder if the famous subterranean passage was under the place where they then stood: and yet, forsooth, no person in Canada ever before heard of it! Whatever may be the facts in relation to those disclosures, we needed not your paper to satisfy us either that Jesuits must be as holy as the 'Blessed Virgin Mother' herself, or those conventicles of unprotected females are scenes of the most damning character.—A PROTESTANT."

From the Long Island Star, of Feb. 29th.

"Since the publication of our last paper, we have received a communication from Messrs. Howe and Bates, of New York, the publishers of Miss Monk's 'Awful Disclosures.' It appears that some influence has been at work in that city, adverse to the free examination of the case between her and the priests of Canada ; for thus far the newspapers have been most entirely closed against everything in her defence, whilst most of them have published false charges against the book, some of a preposterous nature, the contradiction of which is plain and palpable.

" Returning to New York, she then first resolved to publish her story, which she has recently done, after several intelligent disinterested persons had satisfied themselves by much examination that it is true.

When it became known in Canada that this was her intention, six affidavits were published in some of the newspapers, intended to destroy confidence in her character ; but these were found very contradictory in several important points, and in others to afford undesigned confirmation of statements before made by her.

" On the publication of her book, the New York Catholic Dairy, the Truth-teller, the Green Banner, and other papers, made virulent attacks upon it, and one of them proposed that the publishers should be 'lynched.' An anonymous handbill was also circulated in New York, declaring the work a malignant libel, got up by Protestant clergymen, and promising an ample refutation of it in a few days. This were re-published in the Catholic Dairy, &c., with the old Montreal affidavits, which latter were distributed through New York and Brooklyn ; and on the authority of these, several Protestant newspapers denounced the work as false and malicious.

" Another charge, quite inconsistent with the rest, was also made, not only by the leading Roman Catholic papers, but by several others at second hand—viz., that it was a mere copy of an old European work. This had been promptly denied by the publishers, with the offer of 100 dollars reward for any book at all resembling it.

" Yet such is the resolution of some, and the unbelief of others, that it is impossible for the publishers to obtain insertion for the replies in the New York papers generally, and they have been unsuccessful in an attempt at Philadelphia.

" This is the ground on which the following article has been offered to us, for publication in the Star. It was offered to Mr. Schneller, a Roman Priest, and Editor of the Catholic Dairy, for insertion in his paper of Saturday before last, but refused, although written expressly as an answer to the affidavits and charges his previous number had contained. This article has also been refused insertion in a Philadelphia daily paper, after it been satisfactorily ascertained that there was no hope of gaining admission for it into any of the New York papers.

" It should be stated, in addition, that the authoress of the book, Maria Monk, is in New York, and stands ready to answer any questions, and submit to any enquiries put in a proper manner, and desires nothing so strongly as an opportunity to prove before a court the truth of her story. She has already found several persons of respectability who have confirmed some of the facts, important and likely to be attested by concurrant evidence ; and much further testimony in her favour may be soon expected by the public.

" With these facts before them, intelligent readers will judge for themselves. She asks for investigation, while her opponents deny her every opportunity to meet the charges made against her.

Mr. Schneller, after expressing a wish to see her, to the publishers, refused to meet her anywhere, unless in his own house; while Mr. Quarter, another Roman Catholic priest, called to see her, at ten o'clock one night, accompanied by another man, without giving their names, and under the false pretence of being bearers of a letter from her brother in Montreal.

MYSTERIES OF A CONVENT.

THE

THRILLING

MYSTERIES

OF A

CONVENT REVEALED!

PHILADELPHIA:
T. B. PETERSON, 101, CHESTNUT STREET

LITERARY NOTICE.

"This book will be eagerly sought for and appreciated by all those sincerely and conscientiously opposed to the worst of tyrannies—*the tyranny of religion.* It is unquestionably one of the best works that has been issued during the nineteenth century. Mr. Peterson has been at considerable expense in getting up this interesting book; and we feel assured that it will have a rapid sale, as there are few persons of the present day, but who wish to be made fully acquainted with this important subject. The author grapples his subject with a keen, determined intellect, and all the bigotry, fanaticism, practises, and doings in a Convent, are here exposed to the light of the noon-day sun. It is a work of especial interest at the present time. The author is one of the most celebrated Methodist preachers now living, and what he exposes and narrates he does from the heart. All should read and study it. It is a rich, highly interesting work, and the *low* price at which it is published, will, as it should, bring it within the reach of the tens of thousands in every section of our country that should read it."—*True Sun.*

THE MYSTERIES OF A CONVENT.

CHAPTER I.

Antique mansion—Family portraits—Count of St. Aubyn—Father and daughter.

Towards the close of the last century, there stood, within a few miles of Paris, an ancient, moss-grown chateau, embosomed in oaks, whose gnarled limbs, covered with mistletoe, gave evidence of their antiquity, and showed that they had battled against many a fierce onset of the elements.

This venerable pile, with the ample and handsome demesne in whose midst it stood, was the family seat of the Counts of St. Aubyn, through whose long line of succession it had descended from sire to son, in spite of political convulsions which had shaken the State to it very foundations. Every thing about the building wore the impress of time. The furniture, throughout its almost numberless rooms, was of the most antique fashion, and had been preserved with great care, indeed with a sort of superstitious reverence. Over the spacious fire-place in the great dining hall, which had so often rung with the voice of revelry, was suspended the once brilliantly illuminated, but now discoloured, pedigree of the family; while upon the oaken panelled walls were hung suits of mail, and implements of war and of the chase, many of which were of the most primitive and curious construction. In various parts of the building were to be found portraits of those members of the family who had been remarkable for achievements on the battle field, or in the tournament; for learning, for statesmanship, or for personal beauty: the mailed warrior, the tilting knight, the grave councillor of state, the robed priest, and the lovely belle of her day. In the chapel, the floors and walls were covered with marble tablets and monuments, whose bass-reliefs and inscriptions declared the honours of the race in bygone days; while in the library was carefully preserved an ancient volume of vellum, heavily bound, and clasped with brass, upon whose broad pages the chaplains of the family had been wont to record the history of the successive counts. An old oaken chest, which stood in one corner of this room, was filled with musty rolls and moth-eaten parchments, that told many a curious tale, and contained the evidence of many a dark transaction.

Charles, the Count of St. Aubyn, at the period when our story opens, had distinguished himself in the wars of France, and had fought many a well-contested battle; but having, in the last of these, received a dangerous wound which wholly incapacitated him for the further service of his country, in the army, he had retired to his patrimonial residence, where he spent much of his time in superintending the education of his only daughter, Louise, a beautiful girl, now in her eighteenth year; his remaining leisure being devoted to the management of his estate, and to court intrigue.

Naturally of a cold, haughty, and tyrannical disposition, which his long career as a military leader had by no means abated, but, on the contrary, had greatly aggravated; excessively vain of his ancestry; impatient of all contradiction, and ambitious of power and preferment; Count St. Aubyn was but ill prepared for the accomplishment of a task which had been early devolved upon him by the death of the countess, soon after giving birth to Louise; and this task was rendered the more difficult by her inheritance of her father's traits of character; and by the fact that, while absent from home in the service of his country, he had confided his daughter to the care of a maiden aunt, who was too indolent to take any interest in what so nearly concerned her neice, and to the chaplain of the family—a Roman Catholic priest—who thought that any knowledge beyond that of the breviary was wholly useless for a young and beautiful girl, sole heiress to a noble name and princely estate. Possessing, however, an inquiring mind and great natural talents, Louise spent much of her time, from the age of twelve years, in her father's library; reading such books as suited her fancy, and especially delighting in the perusal of the volume of vellum which contained the history of her ancestors. Finding, too, the key which unlocked the old oaken chest, she eagerly pored over the contents of its time-rusted parchments. At other times, she would ramble over the gloomy pile, passing from room to room, spending hours in looking at the family pictures which smiled or frowned upon her from the walls, and in examining the curiously wrought tapestry with which some of the rooms were draped; or, going forth into the forest near the chateau, she would stroll from place to place, as her fancy dictated, or sit by the side of the rippling stream, lost in bright musings, engendered by the works of fiction she had read. Companionship she had none, save when, after supper, she entered the servant's hall, where she would sit until midnight, listening to the legends which were recited to her by the old retainers of the family, who had spent more than half a century in the household, and by those who had accompanied her father to the wars. Then, retiring to her room, with her imagination wrought up to the highest pitch, she would lie awake for hours. Thus raised until she had passed her seventeenth year, it is not wonderful that when Count St. Aubyn, himself, undertook to superintend the education of his daughter, he should find her mind in chaotic confusion, and her disposition wilful and impatient of all restraint.

Fortunately for both of them, the protracted illness consequent upon the severe wound that he had received in his last battle, and during which Louise had nursed her father with the greatest affection and tenderness, scarcely ever leaving his bedside, had served greatly to attach them to each other, preparatory to those collisions of temper which were sure to be the result of the association, as teacher and pupil, of two persons so unhappily constituted as Louise and the Count. In spite of this, however, scenes frequently occurred in the Library, during the three years which were spent by them, in this relation, which would beggar discription; the father in a storm of wrath; and the daughter alternately weeping passionately, and then turning upon her parent, with all the fury of an ungovernable spirit. Indomitable in his purpose, however, the Count had at length succeeded, to some extent at least, in bringing Louise into subjection to his iron will, when events occurred which changed the whole tenor of her life, and marvellously shaped her future destiny. A recital of these we shall defer to the next chapter.

CHAPTER II.

Events foreshadowed—A daughter's anxiety—A scene of terror—The victim's doom—The daughter's horror.

Causes had been in operation, for years, tending to revolution and bloodshed in France:—causes which it is the province, not of the writer, but of the historian, to trace and to record. The tremblings and ominous mutterings of the glaciers had long been felt and heard:—good men, and there were a few, had stood aghast, as the earth reeled beneath their feet, in fearful expectation of sudden and dire catastrophe; bad men, and their name was legion, had, with malicious exultation, looked forward to mighty upheavings of popular excitement, which should benefit them by the change they should effect, be that change what it might, and ruin whom it would. At length, the mountain masses are loosened; the avalanche descends, crashing, crushing, destroying, in its downward rush, life, honour, fortune,—all that it had cost the labourers of centuries to rear:—at one fell blow, civil government, the rights of man, religion, are overwhelmed in one undistinguishable mass of utter ruin; while anarchy, cruelty, and impiety, sit enthroned in gloomy grandeur and the wide-spread desolation, wearing a triple crown, baptized in the blood of more than a million of victims;—fit emblem of that worn by "*Babylon the great, the Mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth;*" which would exalt thus to sit gloating upon the ruins, not of one province or state only but of all the world; while the wailings, not of infidel France alone, but of *Protestantism* every where, should come welling up as sweetest melody in her ears.

Count St. Aubyn,—Count no longer, for titles of honour had been abolished,—was not one of those who could be inert or inactive at such a crisis as this; and soon rendered himself obnoxious to the fury of the "*Infernal Triumvirate.*" He had, of late, been frequently absent from home, during the day, but had always returned, at night, for the protection of his daughter. At length, however, he came not, as usual; and Louise felt greatly alarmed, for she was apprised of passing events, as they occurred from day to day. She went to the great hall door, and, looking out upon the darkness, waited long and anxiously for her father's return but he came not. She sent messengers to the city, that she might, if possible, learn what had befallen him. The old clock, which stood in the hall, and whose tickings seemed to vibrate through her every nerve, at last told the hour of midnight. Still he came not, nor had her messengers returned. She knew not what to do, nor where to send; she feared the worst, yet hoped hourly for her father's arrival. Wearied and exhausted by anxiety, as well as chilled by the damp night air, she went to her room, and tried to compose herself, but in vain; the old clock continued to sound forth, from its iron throat, hour after hour, and still her father,—whom she loved, in spite of their outbursts of temper in the past,—her father came not. Hastily summoning her maid, she bade her descend to the servants' hall, and order the coachman to get ready the carriage; and, just as the day broke, she threw herself into it, and, saying, "To the city," leaned heavily upon the cushions, in a perfect fever of excitement.

It was already seven o'clock when she reached the gates of Paris; and here fresh difficulties arose in her path. She was refused admittance; but, opportunely for her, a friend of her father, who had some influence with the guard, arrived just at the moment, and succeeded in bribing him to let her pass; the stipulation being made, however, that the carriage should remain outside the barrier, and that she should enter the city, alone and on foot, so as to attract no observation.

What a scene met her gaze, on her entrance into the thoroughfares through which she had repeatedly passed before, a light-hearted maiden, richly appareled, seated in the old family coach, by the side of her father, the Count; of whose dignified and commanding appearance she was so justly proud. Now, alone, on foot, and, happily for her own safety, but indifferently clad, with her heart palpitating under the influence of fear and anxiety, she had to make her way through a dense mass of human beings, heaving and rolling like the waves of the ocean, when moved by the storm. Here were men, drunken with excitement and intoxicated with power, for the mob ruled—drunken men uttering the most awful blasphemies, and crying, in tones which called the very soul within her, "*Blood! Blood. More Blood!*" Here were woman with dishevelled hair; torn and ragged dresses, besmeared with blood; countenances haggard and pale for want of food; women blaspheming, and crying, in accents of despair—"*Bread! Bread. Down with the Aristocrats—give us bread, or we die.*" There the infuriated crowd was making a bonfire of the elegant but broken furniture which had just been taken from a neighbouring mansion—that mansion in flames; while another party was dragging to the guillotine the late owner of this princely establishment—his only crime, perhaps, his wealth. A few steps further on, and she beheld some unfortunate being hanging, lifeness, from a lamp-post; and advancing but a short distance beyond, she encounters a dead body, lying upon the pavement, with its ghastly, upturned features, ground by the heel of some ruffian, until they could not be distinguished. Blood, blood, blood—every where; in the street; on the pavement; standing in great puddles, running in the gutters, spattered upon the walls in the houses, staining the faces and garments of the populace; blood crying to heaven for vengeance upon the regicides, the homicides. O, it was a horrible spectacle—a sight to have sickened her woman's heart—a sight which she never forgot, and which mysteriously affected her whole after life, as it stood in connexion with the event of that morning, which froze that heart to stone, and for ever dried up that kindly emotion. Drawing her shawl closely about her person, and stopping from time to time to recover herself, as in the swayings to and fro of the maddened crowd, she was now hurried rapidly forward, and now almost hurried to the ground. She had succeeded in passing through several streets, as yet unharmed, when, on suddenly turning a corner, she stood in full view of the guillotine; around which was gathered a motley multitude of men, women, and children, all vociferating that terrible cry—"Blood! blood!" One glance sufficed to tell her that she had found her father, but under what fearful circumstances. There he stood erect upon the scaffold, casting a look of dignified defiance upon the surging mob, thirsting for his life. A moment more, and he, who had never feared death upon the battle field, calmly lays his head upon the block. Spell-bound, Louise sees the fatal knife descend with lightning speed, but she sees no more: with one wild shriek of agony she falls swooning upon the hard stones; the last link severed which bound her in sympathy to her race.

CHAPTER III.

Returning consciousness—Louise the orphan—A friend in need—Genuine sympathy—Disinterested generosity.

On recovering from the state of insensibility into which she had been thrown by the dreadful spectacle that she had witnessed, she was surprised to find herself on a low pallet, in a small and ill-furnished apartment, with a female bending over her, whom she did not recollect to have seen before, busily engaged in chafing her temples.

"Where am I?" cried the unhappy girl. "O, where am I, and where is my dear father? I have had such a horrible dream! I thought I saw my father lay his head upon the bloody block—that I saw his gray hairs floating on the breeze, and then—I saw that terrible knife—but tell me, O, tell me," she added, eagerly grasping the arm of the stranger, "have I been dreaming, or is it, indeed, a fearful reality? Speak, I entreat you, for my poor head reels so, that I cannot remember any thing."

The good woman sought to soothe her, and to evade the question; telling her how important it was for her to be quiet; but all her benevolent efforts were in vain. Louise pressed the question, until, finding it was still evaded, she screamed in agony—

"Then, indeed, it was no dream. They have murdered my poor father. Take, O take me to him!" and again fell back exhausted and faint upon the couch.

Her kind hostess again succeeded in restoring her to consciousness; and then, in spite of all entreaties, refused to answer any questions, until she could have tried to sleep.

Louise, fully aware of her loss, and that she was truly an orphan, for her father had been cruelly murdered before her eyes; her mother had died in giving her birth; and she had not a blood relative in all France; wrung her hands in silent agony, and tossed from side to side upon the bed, until at length wearied nature yielded to the soft impulse of sleep: and she lay, for four or five hours, in unconsciousness of the sorrows which had settled down upon her young spirit, like a pall of darkness.

While she thus sleeps, it may be as well to inform the reader, that, when Louise uttered the cry of horror, and swooned in the street, on seeing her father guillotined, there stood not far from her in the crowd, an old soldier, in the dress of a labourer, who, attracted by her scream, and looking upon her face, discovered in her the daughter of his old general, the Count St. Aubyn, whose blood was, at that moment, streaming from the neighbouring scaffold. Hastily seizing the poor girl, as she lay upon the pavement, her dress stained with the crimson fluid, which stood in puddles all about her, he raised her in his arms, while the rushing crowd seemed ready to trample them both beneath their impatient feet; and, forcing a passage, with his brawny shoulder, through the heaving masses of human beings, who appeared to be demons incarnate keeping their infernal holiday on the green earth, which blushed in blood, he made his way as best he might, until, turning into a by-street which was less thronged than that through which he had passed, he presently reached the outskirts of the city, and arrived at his own humble dwelling. Here depositing his unconscious burthen upon the bed, and bidding his wife take care of the stranger, until his return, he went forth, and, going to a restaurant, bought a loaf of bread and a bottle of wine, with which he hastened home; the shouts of the maddened multitude, from a distance, even now and then falling upon his ear, as victim after victim sank beneath the stroke of the guillotine. Accustomed as he had been to the mingled cries of the battle-field, and to scenes of carnage, there was something inexpressibly dreadful to him in these fiendish shouts of citizens imbruing their hands in each other's blood, and in the wild excitement of neighbours fighting against their neighbours, in mortal strife and deadly hatred.

On re-entering his dwelling, he found Louise sleeping disturbedly, and, seating himself by the side of his wife, proceeded to relate to her the events of the morning, and to inform her who their guest was.

Presently Louise awoke, and, heaving a deep sigh, cast a hurried glance from one to the other of the strangers who sat near her bedside, as if to inquire where she was, and who they were.

With a kindness and consideration that would have done honour to those who make greater pretensions to refinement than this humble couple, Marie—for this was the good woman's name—approached Louise, and, placing her hand affectionately upon her forehead, from which, as well as from her hair and dress, all stains had been carefully removed while she had been sleeping, pressed her to take some nourishment, and placed before her the bread and wine which the old soldier has brought home. Louise succeeded in taking a little of both, and then, thanking her kind but unknown friends, begged they would satisfy the enquiries of her mind.

Pierre Loubat—her generous preserver—then proceeded to relate what had occurred during the interval of her unconsciousness, and assured her that, as long as she desired it, his house, humble as it was, should be her home; adding that her father, under whom he had served in the army, had saved his life on the battle-field; and that, while he had an arm to raise, it should be outstretched for her protection.

"Thanks, most kind friends," replied Louise, who, while listening to the good Pierre, had covered her face with her hands; the heaving of her bosom, and the tears as they fell upon her dress, meanwhile evincing her deep emotion; "a poor orphan, for truly such I am, cannot reward you, for your benevolence to her, but may that God who has promised to be a father to the fatherless, pour upon you his choicest blessings."

"Speak not of reward," was the prompt and feeling response of the labourer; "your noble father has laid me under eternal obligations, and it is but a poor return to befriend his child. You have only to command my services, to secure them in any way you may require."

"But tell me," he presently added, "are there none of your relations in the city, to whom you would like to send a message by me?"

Louise shuddered as this question fell upon her ear; and, with a fresh gush of tears, replied, "Alas, I have not a blood relative on earth. My parents are both dead; and I know not another being, besides myself, in whose veins flows the blood of the St. Aubyns."

"But your father must have had many friends in Paris, who would be glad to be of service to you now."

"My father had friends, while in prosperity; but now that he is dead, and by means of the guillotine, who would dare to befriend his child? To apply to them, would be but to throw myself upon the same block, and to meet the same fate."

"The Virgin forbid!" exclaimed Marie, devoutly crossing herself.

"Alas! poor young lady," said Pierre, in tones of heartfelt sympathy, "how sad is your condition! Be assured, at least, that neither Maria nor I will ever desert or betray you."

A fresh burst of grief was the only response that Louise could make.

At length, as though a sudden thought had crossed her mind she asked,

"Do you know M. De Montmain, the banker?"

"I know where he lives," replied he.

"You will greatly oblige me then," said Louise, "if you will go to his house, to-morrow morning; and say to him, that the daughter of the Count St Aubyn would be glad to see him here, for a few minutes, on business."

"I will most cheerfully," quickly returned Pierre, as if it did his noble heart good to have an opportunity of redeeming his promise to the poor orphan.

Here Marie interposed, and, insisting that Louise should be left to seek rest, made arrangements for the night, and, giving up their own bed to her, retired to a little room adjoining that in which she was to sleep.

CHAPTER IV.

Kind-hearted banker—Noble resolve—A generous proposal—Obligation returned—A thankful heart.

On the following morning, at an early hour, Pierre called at the residence of M. de Montmain, and having with some difficulty, succeeded in seeing the banker, informed him that a young lady wished to see him, on business, at No. 58, Rue de Nantes, and that if he would go with him, or say when it would suit his convenience to make the call, he would show him the way.

"But my good friend," replied the banker, "you have not told me her name; and these, you are aware, are not times for a man in my situation to be calling on nameless damsels, simply because they express a desire to see him. Who is this unknown lady?"

"The daughter of General St. Aubyn, who was guillotined yesterday," answered Pierre, bowing respectfully, and brushing away a tear from his eye.

"The daughter of General St. Aubyn, who was guillotined yesterday!" slowly repeated M. de Montmain, looking fixedly upon Pierre. "Impossible!" added he, "How came she there?"

"I carried her there on my shoulder, from near the scaffold on which she had seen her noble father perish," answered Pierre; "and I intend to protect her with my own life, now that she is an orphan, without home, and without friends." As he said this, the good soldier drew himself up to his full height, and looked as though he saw before him some one who had intentions of injury towards his young protegée.

The banker saw the noble bearing of the veteran, and, reading the devotion to her interests which he had unconsciously betrayed, took him warmly by the hand, exclaiming,

"Noble-hearted man, the great God will bless you for this kindness to the orphan. Come, show the way to your house; I will follow you anywhere."

Advancing hastily along the less-frequented streets; for no one, who had anything at stake, loved, in those troublous days, to linger by the way, or to mingle with the crowd; the banker and the old soldier soon reached the dwelling of the latter, and were seated by the bed of Louise, who was too feeble to arise.

M. de Montmain immediately recognised the daughter of the deceased General, whose features she bore very distinctly, and whom, indeed, he had once seen at her father's; and, addressing her in tones full of sympathy and kindness, asked if he could in any way serve the child of his old friend.

"I am an orphan, and destitute"—replied Louise, her utterance almost choked with emotion—"and having no home to which I can safely repair, while I am willing to become a burden to these kind-hearted people, who have saved my life, and perhaps, at least, my honour, I have sent for you, M. de Montmain, to know if my father, at the time of his death, had any money in your hands, and if in any way I can, as his sole survivor, obtain that money, or any portion of it?"

"There are in my hands, belonging to the estate of your late father, 18,000 francs;" replied the banker—"but you are aware, Mademoiselle, that, in times like these, it is impossible to foresee what may happen, as well as to take any legal steps, to secure to you the inheritance; besides, if it were known to the government that this amount were now standing on my books to the credit of General St. Aubyn, it would be seized upon immediately, and confiscated to the purposes of the State. In this dilemma, it is very difficult to determine what is best to be done."

Having said this, the banker sat for some time in deep thought; at length raising his eyes from the floor, upon which they had been intently fixed, he said, "I will tell you what I will do, Mademoiselle Louise; I am under obligations to your excellent father for advances made me in my business, when I greatly needed them. This money is rightfully yours, independent of all legal proceedings, which are now of course entirely out of the question: but eighteen thousand francs is a large sum of money, and if it were discovered, after I had paid it over to you, that it was in my possession subsequent to the General's death, the Government might confiscate that amount of my funds, and hold me responsible for the entire sum. But you need money, and must have it; I will, therefore, in the course of two hours from this time, pay you the sum of ten thousand frances, and take your receipt for that amount, together with a bond of indemnity against any loss that I may sustain by the act, payable out of the estate; should these troublous times ever pass away, and men's right be once more respected and established. The remainder to be left in my hands, subject to the establishment, at some future time, of your claims, as heiress of your father."

"You have my thanks, M. de Montmain, for this generous offer," said Louise, in tones which at once evinced her surprise at the generosity of the banker, and the relief which it afforded to her mind. "I will most cheerfully sign any writing you may require, and shall consider myself under obligations to one who has manifested so much honesty and true kindness of heart."

The banker hastened home, and, returning in about an hour, placed in Louise's hands the sum of ten thousand francs in gold, taking the necessary papers to secure himself from loss, as far, at least, as possible, under the circumstances; and, assuring her of his readiness at all times to serve her, for the sake of her father, he bade her adieu, and left the house.

Louise at once called the good Pierre to her, and, counting into his hand, in spite of all his remonstrances, five hundred francs, desired him to consider them as his own, and to take the remainder into his safe keeping, for her use. It is unnecessary to add that the trust was never betrayed.

CHAPTER V.

A comfortable retreat—Retribution—The peasant girl's victim—Blood for blood—The chiefs receive their merited doom—The orphan's curse.

EIGHTEEN months rolled away, and still found Louise an inmate of the same family which had first afforded her protection. They lived not in the same house, however; for she had insisted upon their taking one somewhat larger and more comfortable, at her expense, while it was at the same time less exposed to the prying eye of curiosity, and her safety was, therefore, rendered the greater. The good Marie ministered to all her wants, and submitted to all her caprices; while Pierre daily brought her the news from the city.

Meanwhile, the first of that "Infernal Triumvirate" which had condemned her father to death by the guillotine, and had deluged France with the blood of her citizens, had fallen beneath the knife of the peasant girl, who putting aside the weakness of her sex, and clothing herself with enthusiastic devotion to the interests of her native land, bared her arm in the name of Freedom, and inspired with a heaven-born heroism, tracked the monster Marat to his lair, and there stuck that knife to the heart of him whom she believed to be the foremost in the butchery of her countrymen, and whose death would, she thought, give birth to the liberties of France.

Next fell Danton—a victim to the jealousy and to the wiles of the unprincipled Robespierre—but while he met the fate which his atrocities so richly merited, his dying prediction was fully verified, for, in falling, he dragged with him the arch-murderer, Robespierre, from the guilty seat of power, which they had occupied together.

On the morning of the 29th of July, 1794, at daybreak, the streets of Paris were filled to repletion with masses of human beings, all converging to one point of general attraction. The populace of this great and wicked city, their hands and garments reeking with the gore of the thousands whom they had slain in the fever of popular excitement, had grown weary of the sight of blood, and yet they were thronging to witness another execution. Onward they press, one cry sounding above all others—"Down with the tyrant—down with Robespierre. To the guillotine with him!" What, Robespierre! Ay, that name, at mention of which, as it passed from lip to lip, hundreds of thousands, nay, all France, had trembled :—that name, whose magic power had led the maddened multitude to deeds of violence, and to words of blasphemy which astonished the world—that name, which had swept, sirocco-like, over the land, blaspheming and blighting—that name, once so powerful, now so powerless—that name, once so dreaded, now so contemned. How are the mighty fallen! Robespierre is about to expiate his crimes, upon that very scaffold to which he had sentenced so many victims. The guillotine stands on the very spot where the unhappy Louis XVI. and his noble consort, Marie Antoinette had suffered. It stands in the Place de la Revolution. Around it gathered the dense crowd, waiting impatiently to witness the death of him who had promised them riches, and fields of grain, but who had, instead, fed them upon the blood of their fathers, and husbands, and brothers. Now the crowd disports to the right and left; and, amid cursings, and execrations, and shouts of exultation, the band of conspirators, against the liberties of France, slowly advances. There are Henriot, and Couthon, and St. Just, and Dumas, and Coffinal, and Simon, and others, but conspicuous among them all is Robespierre—the master-spirit, and arch-conspirator, the tyrant, the bloodhound, of the Revolution. The bodies of Henriot, of Couthon, and of Robespierre, are multilated—mangled in the bloody scene consequent upon their seizure, the night before. They all stand around the fearful instrument of death, each awaiting his turn. One by one they ascend the platform, above which the glittering blade is suspended, and each is beheaded; a wild shout of joy goes up from the congregated thousands who witness this last offering to liberty. At last comes the tyrant's turn, and, as he mounts the scaffold, a yet wilder shout ascends from the multitude, who are frantic with exultation. There he stands, the last of the dreaded enemies of human rights! See the blood oozing from the bandage that holds up his fractured jaw; it runs down upon his clothing; the executioner snatches the bandage from his head; the broken jaw falls upon his breast; and one yell of terrible agony is wrung from his stoical soul, which had borne the anguish of the previous night, without a groan. But, what cry is that which pierces the ear, whose tones, sounding even above the yell of mortal pain which filled every heart with horror, are heard ringing out shrill and clear upon the air? It was the voice of a woman—a young and beautiful woman, whose dress of deepest mourning, and whose pale face, showed that she has been a sufferer from the tyrant's cruelties. Hark to the voice! "Murderer of my father, your agony fills me with joy; descend to hell, covered with the curses of the orphan! aye, covered with the curses of all the orphans and widows you have made in France;" See, he shuts his eyes, he would fain stop his ears! he would gladly hush his conscience, but he cannot; the iron has pierced his soul—"*there is a God.*" The retributions of that hour declare it. Robespierre feels it; and, with remorse gnawing at his vitals, he bows his head upon the block, and his doomed spirit passes into the awful presence of Jehovah: exultant shouts proclaim the joy of France, that a tyrant has been removed from the face of the earth; while the whole scene declared the presence of an avenging Deity.

The execution over, the crowd dispersed; and Louise St Aubyn, leaning heavily upon the arm of Pierre, the old veteran, walked slowly homeward. It was she who, having heard what was to transpire that day, had clothed herself in mourning, and, standing beneath the guillotine, had cursed Robespierre, the murderer of her father.

CHAPTER VI.

Louise longs to leave France—Looking towards America—Prevails upon Pierre and Marie to accompany her—Arrival in the new Republic—Church of the Jesuits—Interview with Father Jubert.

FRANCE was hateful to Louise, since the death of her father, and the atrocities which she had witnessed, and of which she had heard; and she longed to leave its shores. She had heard much of the young Republic across the broad Atlantic, and determined to go thither, that she might no longer be surrounded by those whom she regarded as lawless murderers, against whom she had in secret vowed eternal hatred. Indeed, her heart was filled with bitterness towards her whole race, save the good Pierre, the kind Marie, and the generous banker, M. de Montmain; the only beings, in all the world, towards whom she felt one emotion of regard or esteem.

On the morning succeeding the tragical events narrated in the last chapter, Louise called Pierre and his wife into her room, after breakfast, and, bidding them be seated, she said to them:

"My friends, I hate France; I wish to leave it, and seek an asylum in the new home of the sorrow-stricken, the United States. I am unwilling to leave you behind; will you go with me?"

"But Mademoiselle," replied Pierre, who was much astonished at this intelligence—"we have not the means; and, besides, we should starve, when we got there, without friends, and without business."

"As to the means of getting to America"—responded Louise—"leave that to me; I will provide them. It is as little as I can do in return for the kindness which you have manifested to me, during the many months that I have spent under your hospitable roof. I will pay your passage across the ocean; and, when we reach that friendly shore, we will take a house, and live together as we do here. Our good Pierre can find something to do; you, Marie, and I, can keep house, and thus we will do very well. I have seven thousand francs left; and, while these last, you shall not want. Come, let us leave this horrible country, and go at once where at least our lives will be safe, and we can earn our daily bread in peace. What say you, my friends?"

"Ah! it will be hard to leave Paris, with all her faults," answered Pierre: "but yet, I feel well assured, from what I have heard about that far off country, that Mademoiselle Louise advises for the best. We love her,"—continued he, addressing himself to his wife—"and we will go with her; we can soon earn enough, by our labour, to repay what she may advance for our expenses. Come, Marie, say yes, and we will go with her."

"Well, Pierre, be it so, then. We have nothing to keep us here, save our love for la belle France, and who knows but we may grow rich in America, which we assuredly we cannot do here."

"By the way," said Pierre, "it just occurs to me, at this moment, that the captain of the new brig, the Jean Maurice, told me, the other day, that he would start from Havre for New York, some time next week. If you say so, Mademoiselle Louise, I will see the captain, and ascertain what he will charge to take us all to that place."

Suffice it to say that the arrangements were all made to the satisfaction of Louise and her companions; their passports obtained, hers being in an assumed name; and on the Thursday following the conversation that has just been related, the Jean Maurice was breasting the waves of the ocean, on her way to the new world.

In due time the brig arrived at its port of destination; and, in a few days, Pierre had taken, at the request of Louise, a nice little house in the suburbs of the city, which was plainly but comfortably furnished; and here the three friends, whom misfortune had so singularly bound together in strong ties, lived in the enjoyment of quiet and repose. Pierre soon found profitable employment; Marie busied herself with household affairs; while Louise employed her time in embroidery, lessons in which she had taken before she left Paris, and for which she received a handsome remuneration from a French merchant, who had been for some time established in business.

Some weeks rolled away, when, one morning, Louise entered the confessional in the church of the *Jesuits*, at New York; and, after a full confession, sought absolution from the priest who was present. He inquired who she was, and, manifesting great sympathy for her sorrows, asked for her address; telling her he would call, in a few days, and pay her a pastoral visit. This priest was a young man, of about thirty years of age, of handsome features, commanding figure, polished manners, and was a refugee from France, being a descendant from a noble family; his name, Jubert.

It was not long before Father Jubert stood before the dwelling of Louise St. Aubyn, and, lightly rapping at the door, was admitted into the little parlour, where sat her whom he came to see. The blush mantled upon the cheek of Louise, as she looked at the handsome priest; and, Jesuit as he was, and accustomed to the maintenance of an iron control over himself, the tell-tale blood which mounted to his face, told that an impression had been made upon his heart which would be exceedingly dangerous to the peace of both.

The interview was a long one; for Father Jubert insisted upon having, from the lips of Louise a full account of her past history; and, during its recital, manifested the deepest interest in its details.

At length, the narrative was completed; and the priest had arrived at the conclusion that Louise St. Aubyn possessed rare qualifications for membership in the order of Jesuits, and that if she could but be persuaded to join that order, it would be at once a most valuable acquisition, while it would render more easy of accomplishment, certain intentions of his own, which had been formed in his mind, while, with flushed cheek and fire-flashing eye, she had told her thrilling story.

He, therefore, related to her, at her request, his own history, taking care to expatiate upon the happy retreat from worldy anxiety, which he had found in the bosom of the church, and in association with the order of which he was a mem ber. His impassioned eloquence, while he enlarged upon this topic, made a deep impression upon the mind of Louise, already predisposed, by misanthrophic feeling, to abandon the world, and shut herself out from ite tumult and its sorrows; and the wily Jesuit, finding that he had succeeded beyond his expectations, thought it best not to push the matter, at that time, any further, but to leave the impression to deepen itself, and work its own way.

Rising gracefully from his chair, and offering his services to Louise, in the most delicate manner imaginable, he promised to visit her again; and took his leave, with all the refined politeness of the accomplished Frenchman.

CHAPTER VII.

Louise's reflections on the interview—Its effect on Louise—Anxiety of Pierre and Marie—The heart's consolations—The wily Jesuit.

This interview with father Jubert left the mind of Louise in a tumult of emotion, such as only a being of her peculiar mould is capable of. Before the disastrous event occurred, which made her an orphan, she had had but little intercourse with those of the opposite sex; and then only when, on State occasions she had visited Paris, in company with her father; and although her imagination had often been inflamed by the perusal of romances, which she found in the library of the chateau, and which she had devoured with great avidity, she had never before met with any one who had inspired her with the feelings which she experienced in the interview with the young, the handsome, and the polished, French priest. In short, she had fallen desperately in love with him; and her quick woman's wit had made the discovery that the passion was a reciprocal one. Had he been of low origin in his native land, she would have spurned the idea; but, as he had informed her that he was a son of the Count Jubert, than whose there was no better blood in France, her romantic disposition seized eagerly upon the adventures; and her fondness for excitement of every kind, that might relieve the tedious monotony of her every-day life, found nutriment upon which to feast itself, in the flame which the Father Jubert had inspired in her bosom.

"But he is a priest," said she to herself, as she thought of the circumstances which had transpired in the interview; and this, instead of shocking her by the new phase in which it presented the subject to her mind, only served to make the affair more romantic, and therefore, the more pleasurable to her excited fancy.

"Yet he loves me, I know;" she added, mentally. "Did not his voice falter, and his cheek redden, as he spoke to me? and, when he bade me good bye, how his hand trembled, as he pressed mine! He loves me, I am sure of it. What a pity he is a priest! How handsome he is! How agreeable!" And thus she sat reasoning and communing with her own thoughts, until Marie announced that dinner was on the table.

"Mademoiselle does not eat to-day," said Pierre, with some anxiety, as he observed that Louise scarcely touched the food on her plate, and seemed greatly abstracted during the silent meal, "I hope you are not unwell."

"I am quite well," replied Louise, aroused, for the moment, from her reverie—"I was only thinking of the past, my good Pierre, and that made me sad."

"Ah! do not let your thoughts go back to the sorrowful days that are past, Mademoiselle Louise;"—said Marie, with a tear in her eye—"it will injure your health; think only of that happy time we now see, and of the bright future."

But Louise heard not what was said by the kind-hearted Marie; she was thinking of the handsome priest, and of the pleasant tones of his voice, which seemed still to vibrate as sweet music upon her ear.

Her simple friends exchanged looks of sympathy, little dreaming of what was passing in the mind of Louise; and, her plain meal being finished, she retired to her own room, and spent the afternoon, not as usual over her embroidering frame, but in the reveries of a passionate imagination, and in building air-castles for the future. She devised a thousand schemes by means of which she thought, for a moment, the obstacles in the way of her union with Father Jubert might be removed; and as insurmountable difficulties would throw themselves around each of these, as if in mockery of her anxiety on the subject, others would arise, to be in turn destroyed by some impossibility that would suggest itself. Thus was passed the afternoon and evening of that eventful day; and, at last, overcome with fatigue, consequent upon the strength of her emotions, and the unwonted mental exercise, she fell asleep, and dreamed of the handsome young priest.

Father Jubert, meanwhile, had sat himself down in his comfortable room, and, after recalling to mind the incidents that had been related to him by Louise in their interview, and reflecting upon the traits of character which she had developed to his keen observation, as well as the beauty of her face and person, which had indeed made a most lively impression upon his heart, as she had supposed; taxed his inventive powers to devise a plan by means of which she might be induced to enter the order, and he accomplish his private purposes. Having succeeded in this, to his own satisfaction, and determined that no time should be lost in carrying his plan into effect, he turned to his writing-table, and addressed to the superior of the order in Rome, a letter, containing some general information, and a summary of the events which had transpired in the last month, not omitting to say enough, in reference to Louise, to attract the attention of the superior to her case, and to evince with what avidity the writer seized upon every circumstance which might promote the interests of the order.

CHAPTER VIII.

The lover's dream—The confessional—Its effects on Louise—Her determination to enter the Convent of St. Mary's—Sorrow of her friends—Enters the Convent, under the appellation of Sister Frances—Father Jubert's wily schemes.

ON awakening, the next morning, Louise found herself, as it were, in a new world;—a world containing but two inhabitants, the priest of whom she had dreamed, and herself. She arose, and dressed herself with more than her usual care: and, after breakfast, telling Marie that she was going to confession, repaired to the church which she had visited a week before; and there, to her great joy, she found Father Jubert in his seat, ready to listen to her. With palpitating heart, she entered the confessional, and her tremulous voice betrayed the emotion of her soul. The priest heard her through, and then administered consolation to her; but what was said, or what was done, in that hour, the writer is not prepared to say. Let it suffice that Louise left the church, with a smile upon her countenance, which bespoke the joy of her heart, and, in the course of a few days, astonished the good Pierre and his wife, by informing them that she had made up her mind to enter the convent of St. Mary's, in New York; and that she should give to them one half of the remaining money which she had brought from France, to be their own: so that they might not suffer from the step she was about to take.

Marie, who loved Louise, burst into tears, and wrung her hands in the bitterness of her sorrow, declaring that she should die without the presence of her good mistress, for so she termed her; and Pierre stood mute and motionless, as if he were striving to comprehend what had been said to him. Meanwhile, Louise soothed them, by telling them that she had no longer anything to live for in this world, that her situation was a peculiarly distressing one, and that her happiness would be greatly promoted by placing herself under the protection of the nuns, in association with whom she could spend her days in acts of devotion and works of piety. She also assured them that her entrance into the convent would not prevent her from seeing them frequently, and from affording them assistance, at any time, should they require it.

Thus assured, her kind friends reluctantly consented to their separation from Louise; and, during the remainder of that day, Marie's eyes were constantly red with weeping.

Some ten days were spent by Louise in making preparations for her conventual life, during which time frequent visits were paid to the family by the nuns of the convent, and by Father Jubert; the latter interesting himself for Pierre so much as to set him up in a small but lucrative business, by means of the money which Louise had presented to him, in token of her friendship, and of the appreciation in which she held his past kindness and fidelity.

Before entering the convent, Louise, under the direction of Father Jubert, made a safe investment of her remaining money, subject to her own order while living, reversionary to the order at her death; and, procuring the services of an agent to visit France, and attend to her interests there, executed an instrument in writing, donating the one half of whatever might be realized from her father's estate, absolutely to the Jesuits, and retaining the control of the other half in her own hands, with an obligation that it should be given ultimately to the convent in which she should end her days.

In due time, she entered the convent, and, having passed her novitiate satisfactorily, became a nun, under the appellation of sister Frances; and, from the moment of her introduction into the order, assumed a position, and acquired an influence, which amply attested the sagacity of Father Jubert, and verified the soundness of the conclusions which he had drawn from their first interview.

Meanwhile, the latter, who was the confessor to this same convent, had not been idle, but had laboured industriously to promote the interests of sister Frances, between whom and himself a solemn compact had been entered into, on the morning of that last visit to the confessional, to which allusion has already been made. By means of an underground communication between the monastery, in which he resided to avoid scandal, and the convent, by the connivance of the sister Porter, who was charged with the care of the gate which opened into the latter building from the arched way which formed this communication, he visited sister Frances almost nightly in her private cell, where he instructed her in the mysteries and usages of the Jesuits, and prepared her fully to act that part which she afterwards filled with such distinguished ability. Nor was the father confessor wholly disinterested in these labours; he was duly rewarded; and, as subsequent events will demonstrate, they were coupled with his own schemes of personal ambition. A more unhallowed compact than that which existed between this priest and sister Frances—a compact instigated by a Jesuit mind, and the foul offspring of passion and of pride—was perhaps never entered into, nor ever more fearfully punished.

CHAPTER IX.

Honours in prospect—Ecstacy of Father Jubert—Power, apostrophe to—The compact not to be forgotten—Arrival of the Legate—His treatment—Approaching ceremony—High Mass celebrated—Consistorial Hall, its splendid furniture and fittings—Procession of priests—The ceremony of Installation—Awful Oath—The cup of blood—The Bible cursed and burned—Fierce exultation of the priests—The American flag of liberty trampled under foot, and torn in pieces—Father Jubert made head of the Order of St. Ignatius Loyola, for the United States of America—Homage and obeisance of the priests—Oath of allegiance.

FIVE years had passed away, when, one morning, a large and carefully-sealed document, bearing upon it the impress of the Father General of the Order at Rome, was handed to Father Jubert. Dismissing the servant who had brought it, he broke the seals, and sat down at his writing-table to read it. As he progressed in its perusal, he became singularly affected; and, at length, arising from his chair, greatly agitated, his eye dilated, and his countenance expressive both of astonishment and joy, he stood erect, and, with the letter held almost at arm's length, he gazed upon it intently, as though he found it difficult to comprehend its meaning. Then, snatching his cap from his head, he threw it up in the air, and clapped his hands in very excitement, exclaiming, as he did so:

"Well, it has come at last; and I—yes, I—Francois Jubert,—am Head of the Order of St. Ignatius Loyola, in these United States."

Again seating himself, and carefully examining the seals, the envelope, the outside and inside, of the document which conferred this high dignity upon him, as though he yet feared that there might be some mistake, he appeared to be fully satisfied with his scrutiny, and, replacing the missive upon the table, again arose and paced the room from one end to the other, talking to himself, and occasionally uttering audibly a sentence or two.

"It is well," he said; "I have richly merited this honour, young as I am."

"Power! dearest idol of my soul, I have thee; aye, and will use thee, too!"

"Louise, our compact shall not be forgotten."

"But when does he say the installation is to take place?" Here he seized the letter, and read,

"The Legate, by whom you are to be installed, within ten days after his arrival in New York, is the bearer of this letter. See that he is treated with all the respect due to his high office."

"Treated with all the respect due to his high office," slowly repeated the Jesuit. "Aye, that shall he be; and he shall be made a stepping stone to further power. I must away to see this Legate."

So saying, he carefully locked up the important document, and, arranging his dress, went out to make the necessary preparations for the suitable reception of him who bore so honourable a commission as the representative of the Supreme Power at Rome.

Several days of feasting and ceremony had passed by, that set apart for the installation of Father Jubert had arrived.

At an early hour in the morning, High Mass was celebrated in the chapel of the monastery; after which all the members of the order, resident in the city, together with several from a distance, who had been hastily summoned to attend, adjourned in procession to the Consistorial Hall, in the same building. This was a spacious room, with arched ceiling, some sixty feet in length, by thirty in width; the walls heavily draped in black cloth, which hung in deep folds, so as entirely to shut out from sight the openings both for windows and doors. At one end of this apartment was a platform raised some three feet above the floor, being covered with rich carpeting of the best fabric. Upon this platform or dais, was placed a sort of throne, painted a bright scarlet, ornamented with gold, and surmounted by a magnificent canopy of silk, of the same colour, trimmed with heavy gold fringe. In the centre of the room was suspended from the ceiling, a richly cut-glass chandelier, with almost innumerable lights brilliantly burning; while placed at convenient distances around the hall were candelabra of silver, supporting massive branch candlesticks, each having several lights. At the lower end, there was a neat but small organ, of powerful tone, and seats for the choristers arranged near it.

Immediately in front of the throne stood an altar, upon which was placed a golden censer, sending forth its clouds of sweet incense to perfume the air; and near this altar, an ancient, curiously carved chair, lined and cushioned with black velvet, and studded with gold-headed nails, intended for the occupancy of the candidate for the honours of the occasion. Seats of a plainer description, but displaying the same contrast of colours, were arranged along the sides of the room, on either hand.

As the procession of priests, clothed in their long black robes, with their peculiarly shaped caps upon their heads, and having the youngest member of the order in the front, bearing a massive silver crucifix, and the oldest in the rear, with the Legate in the centre, supported on the right hand by the candidate, and on the left by the Father Superior of the monastery; and all, save these last, walking two abreast, entering the ante-chamber, they severally armed themselves with drawn swords, which were placed in racks on either hand; and, as they passed through the looped-up drapery which covered the ample door-way, between two sentinels, who, fully armed, were there found on duty, they severally gave the watch-word, on the right and left—"*A bas la Liberté.*"

Having entered the spacious hall, whose whole arrangements presented a most imposing appearance; the Legate was escorted to the throne, by the entire body of priests, who kneeled in a circle around him, while he seated himself, and exclaimed,

"Honour to his lordship, the Legate of his Holiness the Pope, and Vicegerent of the Father General of the Order of St Ignatius Loyola!"

Then rising, and taking their appropriate seats, the crucifix, meanwhile, having been placed in an upright position in a receptacle for its foot, provided for the purpose, near the altar, a low-toned, but beautiful, chant was sung by the choir, assisted by the organ, whose rich notes seemed to fill the apartment with fleeting melody.

The Legate, wearing a robe of gorgeous grandeur, then arose, and, with a distinct voice, read aloud the authority, appointing Francois Jubert the Representative of the Supreme Head of the Jesuits in the United States; and commanding his installation as such, by the hands of the Father Romeo, there present for that purpose.

"The will of the Father General be done!" cried all the priests, devoutly crossing themselves and bowing low, as the Legate took his seat, ; while a joyous peal burst forth from the organ.

Directing the Superior of the monastery to present the candidate at the altar, the Legate proceeded to dictate to the kneeling priest, the rest all standing, the following oath, which was repeated by him in an audible voice:

"I, Francois Jubert, in the presence of the Holy Mother of God; of St. Ignatius Loyola; the Legate of the Father General of the order of Jesuits, and of these members of the same, here assembled: do most sincerely and solemnly swear;—that I will and do renounce all allegiance to king, prince, potentate, and power of every kind, and however constituted, which may now or hereafter hold civil rule in this or in any other country in which I may be called to reside; acknowledging, now and for ever, no other civil or religious rule whatsoever, save that of his Holiness, the Pope—the Vicegerent and Vicar of Christ—and of the Father General of the order of St. Ignatius Loyola; hereby solemnly engaging to surrender myself, at all times, as I now do, body, soul, and spirit, unreservedly to their sole control; to have no will or mind of my own, but unhesitatingly and without question, in all things, to think, and speak, and act, as they may direct.

"I do most sincerely and solemnly swear eternal hatred to all forms of government, whether monarchical or republic, and by whomsoever administered, whose tendency is in any wise, directly or indirectly, to limit, or subvert, or control the supreme and rightful authority of his Holiness, the Pope, or the Father General of the order of Jesuits, to reign over the whole world; and to use my best endeavours, at all times, for the overthrow of all such governments, and the universal extension of that of the order of which I am a member.

"I do sincerely and solemnly swear eternal hatred to all sects, societies, and institutions, of every kind, whether political or religious, which tend to the establishment of civil or religious freedom in this or in any other land; and to use my best efforts for their destruction; ever keeping in my mind that divine maxim of the order, that—'the end justifies the means.'

"I do most sincerely and solemnly swear that I will not appropriate to my own purposes, any funds that may entrusted to my care or keeping, as belonging to the treasury of the order; but will sacredly apply the same to the uses to which they are set apart, rendering to the Father General at Rome, quarterly, a true and faithful account of the same; and that I will further use all possible means to increase the wealth of the order, for the better accomplishment of the purposes for which it has been instituted.

"I do most sincerely and solemnly swear that I will not expose, to any person or persons whatever, nor permit the same to be done by others, any of the secret instructions that may be given to me by the Father General, or any of his duly accredited agents; and should any such at any time fall into the hands of those for whom they were not intended, I will deny, even with oaths, their authenticity, affirming them to be forgeries.

"I do most sincerely and solemnly swear to regard the orders, instructions, and requirements, of the Father General of the order of Jesuits, as of paramount authority to those of his Holiness the Pope, whenever the latter shall clash or conflict with the former; and, should I ever discover any plot or conspiracy, or intention of evil in any person or persons whatsoever, towards the interests or safety of the order, I will, without delay, communicate the same to the Father General, and do all in my power to contravene and to thwart such plot, conspiracy, or intention of evil: always esteeming his interest and authority, as the head of the order, paramount to all others.

"I do most sincerely and solemnly swear that I will keep a true, faithful, and permanent register, and forward a copy thereof quarterly to the Father General, of all events, political or religious that may come to my knowledge, and of all persons, by name, residence, and occupation, whether Protestant or Catholic, who may in any wise, or to any extent, obstruct the progress of our order, or say or do aught against it; and by my agents, officers, and emissaries, do all in my power to injure their business, and ruin their character and fortune.

"I do most sincerely and solemnly swear that I will, at whatever inconvenience or sacrifice to myself, repair, without delay, to Rome, or whatever other place I may be ordered by the Father General; and should I in any manner violate this my oath, I will inform him of such violation, and undergo any punishment that he may think proper to inflict upon me therefore.

"To do, and keep, and perform, all of this, I devoutly call upon the ever blessed Trinity to witness my sincerity; and should I ever prove a traitor to the order, or betray its interests, or its secrets, may the severest pains of purgatory be suffered by me, without cessation or mitigation, for ever and ever."

"Amen! and Amen!" shouted all the priests.

This fearful oath—so fully embracing all the destructive features of the Jesuits, and so faithfully pourtraying the real objects of their organizations—having been taken by the candidate, he was sternly ordered to arise from his kneeling posture, and to place his hand upon the cross, the symbol of his faith; while the whole number of priests were made to surround him, and, pointing their naked swords at his body, were directed to thrust the steel to his heart, should he falter or hesitate in the least in obeying the order which should next be given to him, and which was wholly unexpected by him; a test of the promptitude to comply with any mandate that he may hereafter receive from the Supreme Head of the order, though its performance might involve even death itself.

The Superior of the monastery, by direction of the Legate, then handed to the candidate a small cup, formed of a section of a skull, into which had been poured about half a gill of a dark fluid resembling human blood. Bidding him hold this cup to his lips, the Legate thus addressed him:—

"Francois Jubert, the honour which I am about to confer upon you, by the authority of his Holiness the Pope, and of the Father General of the order of St. Ignatius Loyola, is of too august a character, and involves interests of too great moment to be lightly bestowed, or to be given to one who quails at the sight, or smell, or taste, of human blood; if you have been sincere in taking the solemn oath which has just been administered to you, and if you are worthy of the high honour for which you are the candidate, you will not hesitate to drink the contents of that cup. If you are insincere or craven in spirit, you will hesitate and die. *It is blood*—DRINK!"

No sooner had the word passed the lips of the Legate—uttered in a tone of powerful emphasis, which ran through the vast apartment, and vibrated on the nerves of the priests—than the candidate swallowed the contents of the cup, without even blanching, as though it had contained the most delicious nectar; and, to show that he had done so, held it up at the full stretch of his arm, as his commanding stature towered above the priests who surrounded him, its bottom turned upwards.

"Lower your swords!" cried the Legate, "the candidate is worthy."

The priests let fall their sword points, and, as they did so, a rich and triumphant gust of music sounded forth from the organ; while the choristers chanted the patron saint and founder of the order.

"Bring forth the accursed book," cried the Legate, when the music had ceased.

A copy of the Protestant Bible was then handed to the candidate; while a chaffing dish of burning coal was placed before him.

"That book," said the Legate, "is the great enemy of our Order. It must perish from the earth, or we must cease to exist. Curse and burn it, in token of your enmity and ours, and of your determination to do all that lies in your power for its destruction, and with it for that of all heretics."

"I curse thee, thou text-book of heresy!" exclaimed the candidate, placing the book upon the blazing coals; "I spit upon thee, vile cheat, uncompromising enemy of my order. I burn thee; and, as thou consumest in that flame, so may all heretics be burned in that fierce flame which shall wreathe itself around them, in that hell prepared for the reception and punishment of all those who put their confidence in thee; and reject the true Scriptures, the only true and infallible church."

As the sacred volume—the charter of human liberties—crackled and glowed under the action of the fire, and its smoke ascended heavenward, like the spirit of many a martyr, whose body has been burned by the minions of popery, a shout, wild and fierce, arose from the congregated priests, which shook the room in whose midst they stood; while again the organ and choristers sent forth swelling pæans of praise to "*Mary, the refuge of sinners—the blessed Mother of God.*"

"Bring forth *the ensign of freedom!*" hissed, from between his teeth, the proud Legate, concentrating unutterable hatred in the manner in which he called for the American banner, under whose stars and stripes, Washington and the worthies of the revolution had fought and bled.

"This vile rag," he cried, as the flag of the Union was being unfurled from its staff, "fit emblem of those hellish principles which have wrested this noble land, with its fertile fields, its majestic rivers, and its ocean lakes, from the hands of an imbecile king; which have revolutionized France; and which, if not prevented from spreading, will one day overturn the thrones, and destroy the ancient established monarchies of Europe; that vile rag is more to be dreaded by us, as an order, than all things else, beside the Bible. If it be permitted to pollute the pure air of Heaven by its foul embrace, for half a century longer, it will float on every sea, on every land, and be the rallying sign for the nations of the earth. It must be torn down; it must be trampled under foot; it must trail dishonoured in the dust, or our cause is lost. In token of your love for the order, and determination to uproot liberty—accursed name, more cursed thing!—tear it from its support, and trample it beneath your feet."

Hastily obeying the mandate, the candidate flung the stripes and stars upon the floor, and, with an energy which declared the feelings of his heart, ground them with his heel; while, in a voice of thunder, the Legate cried—

"Jesuits, destroy the enemy of your order. A bas la Liberte."

Like as a herd of famished wolves rush upon their prey, rending and tearing it in pieces, while growling and screaming in horrible discord, they overturn each other in their efforts to gratify their rapacity: so rushed these Jesuits upon the ensign of the world's freedom, and, pushing each other aside, in frantic fury, they soon tore it into a thousand fragments, while their yells and shouts added to the terrible uproar of the scene. Meanwhile from the choir came forth, in strains of wild excitement, as though the downfall of man's liberty and the universal triumph of Jesuitism were already secured, and the world were fixed in eternal slavery, civil, political, and religious—the "Te Deum Laudamus!" insulting high heaven with blasphemous ascriptions of praise, as though it had been instrumental in a destruction of all that is dearest to man, and of highest appreciation in the sight of God and of the blessed angels.

In the meantime, the Legate had received, from an attendant priest, a gorgeous robe, which might have well become a monarch, and, when the insulting strains had died away, and the priests, at his command, had resumed their places, he advanced to the candidate, who stood near the crucifix, and, throwing the garment upon his shoulders, led him to the throne, and, seating him there, turned to the priests, saying—

"Behold, Jesuits, the Father General of the order of St. Ignatius Loyala, for the United States of America; whom I declare duly appointed, and installed in that high office. Approach, and do his Lordship reverence."

So saying, he caused the priests to kneel around the throne, and to repeat after him the following salutation and oath of allegiance:—

"Hail, most worthy Father General, we honour thee!

"We solemnly swear full and explicit allegiance to you, as the representative of the Father General of the order; and to obey, without hesitation, or question, any command that you may give to us, while holding the said high office; here surrendering ourselves body, soul, and spirit, 'as dead corpses,' to your control and government, to be directed and used as your judgment, and that of Him whom you represent, may dictate."

It was a proud moment for Francois Jubert; and well did it repay him for the toil, anxiety and effort, which it bad cost him to gain the eminent distinction.

A choral burst of melody, swelling the general joy and congratulation, closed the ceremonial; and the priests, arising from their knees, and preceded by the Legate and their new Father General, repaired, under the conduct of the Superior to the refectory, where a sumptuous banquet awaited them.

CHAPTER X.

The Father General's affections for Sister Frances on the wane—Removes her, by instituting her to the office of Superior in the Convent of Annunciation—Her active and proselyting efforts shortly after assuming office—Emily de Vere—The Superior's base conduct towards her.

FOR some months prior to the occurrences which have just been described, the Mother Superior of the Annunciation, distant some fifty miles from the city of New York, had been in very feeble health; and, among the first acts which the Father General was called upon to perform after his installation into office, was to appoint a superior to fill the vacancy occasioned by her death.

He had not lost his attachment to Sister Frances, but, with the inconstancy of the Jesuit character, he had for some time past thought it no harm to look upon other pretty faces besides hers; and his facile conscience saw no impropriety in intrigues with other nuns than the good sister, who, exceedingly jealous of her power over him, maintained a most rigid watch upon his conduct; so vigilant, indeed, that there had already occurred some interesting quarrels between them, which, however, were easily made up, although they left traces of uneasiness behind them upon her mind, conscious, as she was, that her personal attractions were not as fresh as once they were.

It was, therefore, a great relief to the Father General to have it in his power to appoint Sister Frances to the vacancy; as, while he adroitly persuaded her that it was an honour which he had long been anxious to see conferred upon her, and one for which she was peculiarly qualified, he would thus be removed from her immediate espionage, and be more at liberty to act as he pleased.

Connected with the Convent of the Annunciation, was a very large female boarding-school, which, in the great dearth of the means of education existing at this time, was very extensively patronized by Protestant families. This was represented to Sister Frances as being a very strong inducement to her acceptance of the appointment, since it would afford her ample opportunity for the protection of the interests of the order, in proselyting to the true faith the children of heretics, who should be entrusted to her care.

Ambitious of power and of preferment; and such an appointment as this, with its cognate rank and influence in the order, having been an object held in view in the original compact, to which allusion has already been made, Sister Frances felt a sacred joy in its contemplation; while, at the same time, her mind misgave her somewhat as to the real motives of the Father General; but when, in an interview which she had with him, in her private room, she broached the subject, and he, with well-affected surprise, the most solemn protestations, and fondest caresses, assured her that she was wholly mistaken; she suffered herself to be deceived, and accepted the office, as an additional proof of the undiminished affection of her priest lover.

In the course of a few weeks, she was duly installed Mother Superior of the Convent of Annunciation, and entered upon the duties of her new station, with a spirit and zeal, as well as exhibition of talents of the highest order, which bespoke her adaptation to it, and presaged a brilliant career for her in the future.

With a tact rarely equalled, and by means of her winning manners, and consummate skill in accommodating herself to the peculiarities of those whom she wished to control, she soon succeeded in engaging the affections of the nuns, and especially in securing those of the young ladies who were boarding pupils in the establishment. In the course of five years after her installation, she was the instrument of converting not less than thirty-five of the latter to the Romish faith: twelve of whom joined the order, and became nuns.

Among the latter was a Miss Emilie de Vere, a young girl, some sixteen years of age, of surpassing beauty, and the only daughter of a wealthy planter in Louisiana, who, having lived in New York for some time before he removed to his southern home, had selected the Convent of the Annunciation, as a suitable place for the education of the child, because of its remoteness from the city. Mr. De Vere was descended from Protestant parentage, as was his wife, but thought well of the Catholics, and apprehended no danger in thus placing his daughter in their hands, while he went to his far-off home, not expecting to see her again for some three years. Great was the self-gratulation of the Mother Superior, when the rich heiress joined the Catholic church, but greater still when she wore the habit of a nun, and bore the name of Sister Theresa, two years before the time of which we are now writing.

In the course of one of his somewhat frequent visits to the Convent,—during which the Mother Superior was always careful to keep, as much as possible, out of sight, all those nuns who had any pretensions to personal attractions,—the Father General happened to meet Sister Theresa in one of the passages; and, immediately recognising her as one whose great beauty had strongly attracted his notice, on the occasion of her taking the religious vows, he entered into conversation with her; and, while holding her hand in his, and giving her some fatherly advice, the Mother Superior, having occasion to pass that way, unseen by them, had witnessed a portion of the interview, and imagined that she saw enough to warrant a jealous feeling on her part, and to determine her to prevent any further occurrence of a similar sort. Dissembling her true feelings, however, she met the Father General, in half an hour afterwards, with a brow as placid as if nothing had occurred to disturb the quiet current of her emotions. To gratify her vindictiveness, nevertheless, as she dared not reproach the General, she degraded the poor nun, for a month, to servile work in the kitchen, without assigning to her any other reason for so doing, than her own will.

CHAPTER XI.

The Father General's visit to the convent—His interest for Sister Theresa—The deformed nun—Proposes a meeting at midnight with Sister Theresa—The Mother Superior's kind entertainment of the Father General in the private parlour—Her chagrin at his abruptly leaving her—Suspicion—Sister Theresa's sorrow and anxiety at receiving the Father's note—Her trepidation on meeting the Father General—He reassures her—His wily stratagems to accomplish his base object—A wolf in sheep's clothing.

The Father General again visited the convent, in about six weeks after this unpleasant occurrence; and, as he approached the great iron gate, the image of the beautiful nun arose to his mind, and he determined, if possible, to learn something more about her; but, aware of the sensitiveness of the Mother Superior, he knew that his inquiries must be made with great caution.

There was, in the convent, a deformed nun, who, because of a grudge which she bore to Mother Frances, and of the uniform kindness with which the General had treated her, had, on more than one occasion, been of service to him in his intrigues in the convent. He determined to make use of her on this occasion.

Accordingly, seizing a favourable moment, he took Sister Martina aside, and asked her who the beautiful nun was. The communicative sister answered his question, and said so much about her, and the cruel treatment which she had recently received at the hands of the Mother Superior, for she knew not what offence, as she affirmed, as greatly to enlist his feelings in behalf of Sister Theresa. Hastily writing a few words upon a piece of paper, which he took from his pocket-book, he handed it to the nun; directing her to give it to Sister Theresa, and to be discreet about the matter, saying that he would reward her handsomely, if she did not betray his trust. Then returning into the parlour, where he had left the Superior, he chatted gaily with her until they were called into the refectory to tea. While seated at the table, the nuns and boarders all present, both the Father General and the Mother Superior were models of propriety and decorum; and the former, especially, was careful not to cast even a look which could serve to excite any suspicion in the mind of the Superior, while their juniors were greatly edified by their pious conversation concerning some of the saints, and the miracles that had been wrought by them.

Arising from the table, the Mother Frances invited the General to her private parlour, the room in which she usually entertained him, when he visited the convent. This was one of a suite of rooms, three in number, set apart for her own special use, and never intruded upon save by her own invitation or permission:—all of these, save the last, opened upon the great passage which ran through the house, on the second floor. The first of this suite was furnished as a private parlour, in very neat and elegant taste. Communicating with this, by means of a sliding pannel, so ingeniously contrived as to be known to but few of the inmates of the family, was a beautiful bed-chamber, most tastefully fitted up; and beyond this, and accessible only from this room, was a smaller apartment, arranged as an oratory, having a mahogany reading desk, a magnificent ebony crucifix, an escritoire inlaid with mother of pearl, and some hanging shelves, upon which were arranged a number of elegantly-bound volumes—the entire suite of rooms was handsomely carpeted, and abounded with indications of female taste and refinement.

Having seated themselves upon a sofa placed at one side of the private parlor, and conversed for some time upon general subjects, the Superior arose, and, taking from a small sideboard a richly cut decanter of old wine, with some glases, and a plate of delicious spiced cakes, which she had prepared with her own hands, she placed these upon a table which stood in front of the sofa, and invited the General to partake of them, and to join her in a game at chess, of which she knew he was passionately fond, and for which she had arranged the materials before him.

They thus occupied themselves until the convent clock tolled the hour of eleven, when the Father General, pleading a headache, and affectionately as well as most gracefully saluting the Mother Superior, asked leave to retire to his own apartment, which was situated on the first floor, and elegantly furnished. This the latter rather ungraciously granted, with an air which showed that she was disappointed; and the priest retired.

Meanwhile, the note had been handed to Sister Theresa, by the deformed nun, and had greatly excited her mind by its contents.

"Meet me in the garden, near the plum tree, alone, at midnight:"—she repeated, for the twentieth time, as she sat in her room, with the note in her hand, thinking over its contents.

"What can he mean?" And then, as the thought that his intentions towards her might be those of evil flashed across her mind, she burst into tears, exclaiming—

"What have I done or said, that could lead him to think so meanly of me?"

"Have I not spurned the base overtures of my own confessor, Father Jerome?"

"Gracious heaven, into what hands have I fallen?"

Here a sense of her helpless condition, as a poor, friendless, and unprotected nun, was forced upon her mind, with such terrible conviction, that she became fearfully agitated; and throwing herself upon the bed, she wept as if her very heart would break.

"O that I had known all this," she said, her voice broken by sobs—"before I took the vows!—How sadly have I been deceived!"

"O, what shall I do? Where shall I hide myself? My honour, my life, is hunted by those who made me vow eternal chastity and purity!"

"But recently I was degraded to the condition of a menial, I I know not why; and now this priest, as if he were master of an eastern harem, and I his Georgian slave, bids me meet him alone in the garden at midnight! Good God, what does this mean?"

"O that I were once more within reach of my dear father! how gladly would I fly to him for protection!"

She again burst into tears, and wept most bitterly: then, as a sudden thought occurred to her mind, she started up, exclaiming—

"It may be so. Perhaps Sister Martina may have intimated to him that I have been badly treated, and, in order to know all about it, without the danger of being interrupted by the Mother Superior, or in order to keep her from knowing that he had spoken to me on the subject, he may have selected this time and place with a view to secresy. It must be so."

The more she thought about the matter, the more fully convinced she became that this was the true state of the case; and while she felt grateful to the good Father, as she now called him, when she regarded him as intending to befriend her, she reproached herself for having thought so ungenerously of him. The idea of being revenged on the Mother Superior, dried up her tears; and she determined to keep the appointment.

It now wanted but a few minutes to twelve; and, wrapping herself up in a heavy shawl, to guard against the chilly midnight air, and, with her heart beating wildly within her breast, she left her room, and noiselessly creeping down the great stairway, pausing at almost every step, as she fancied that some one had discovered her; while she started at the very pantings of her own bosom, she reached the back door of the hall; where, finding the key in the lock, she turned it with great caution, and then, slowly opening one side of the folding leaves, so as to avoid any creaking which might give notice of her movements, and looking out intently to see if any one was passing about, she went forth, quietly drawing the door to behind her, and, with quick and silent step, hastened to the garden. It was a moonlight night, but hazy and somewhat cloudy.

On arriving at the spot which had been designated in the note, she was surprised to find that there was no one there but herself; and she was about to conclude that she was the victim of some treacherous plot, when she beheld the Father General rapidly approaching her. On reaching her, he extended his hand, in the kindest manner, saying, as he did so:

"Thanks, Sister Theresa, for this evidence of your confidence in your Father General. I was half afraid that you would not meet me here, at this lonely hour; and that I should be deprived of the opportunity of doing you a kindness. But," added he, perceiving that she trembled as he spoke to her, "fear not, my child; I mean you no harm; but will protect you from all injury and insult."

Reassured by these words, which she believed to be sincere; and feeling ashamed of her previous misgivings with regard to the Father's intentions, which now seemed to be so wholly unfounded, the nun thanked him for his kind consideration, and said—

"I have every confidence in the honour of the Father General, and cannot suppose that he would betray that confidence."

"Never," replied the wily Jesuit, who quickly perceived the change that had been wrought in the feelings of the trusting girl; for she no longer trembled, nor seemed disposed, as at first, to withdraw her hand from his.

"I have heard," he continued, "no matter how nor from whom, of the cruel conduct of the Superior towards you, recently; and I wish you to tell me, if you can, why she did so?"

"I know not," replied Sister Theresa. "I have endeavoured faithfully to perform every known duty, and to comply, as far as I could, with every rule of the institution. I have always treated the Mother Superior with marked respect; rendering instant obedience to her every command; and I cannot imagine why she suddenly, and without assigning any reason whatever for it, inflicted so severe a punishment upon me, and degraded me so in the eyes of the whole convent. Had the punishment been continued for a short time longer, I should have been seriously ill, for my health is but delicate at the best."

"When did she order you to this menial service?" asked the Father, eagerly.

"On the very day that you left the convent, on your last visit before the present," replied the nun.

"I see it all," muttered the priest, as if communing with his own thoughts; "it is as plain as it can be. Poor fool, to think that I belong to her, soul and body, and that I cannot be civil to a pretty nun, but that instantly, as soon as my back is turned, the poor nun must be a victim of her jealousy and wrath. Pshaw!" he continued, as if still talking to himself; "she shall suffer for this." Then, seeming to recollect himself, he said to Sister Theresa.

"Never mind. I am your friend and protector. I have the right and the power to shield you from oppression and from insult; and, should your feelings ever be outraged again, I require you to let me know it at once, that I may take the necessary steps to redress the wrong. Meanwhile, say nothing, but leave this matter in my hands."

"I know not how sufficiently to thank you for your kindness," responded the nun; her heart really touched by what she believed to be the sincere friendship of the Father General, and fully prepared to feel all its force, by the lonely life that she had led—a life so full of disappointment as to the expectations which she had formed when entering upon the religious duties of a nun—and, with the tears standing upon her cheek, she continued, "but if you will show me how I may evince my gratitude, I will most cheerfully do it."

"You can show your gratitude, Sister Theresa, by loving me," replied the priest, in low and thrilling tones, gently putting his arm around her waist, and drawing her to him, on pretence, as he said, of protecting her from the cool night air; but, as he perceived that she shrank from his embrace, he added,

"Fear not, my child; I love you too well to mean you any harm."

He then entered into a lengthy conversation with her, touching her studies, her employments, and what not that was likely to interest her mind, and inspire her with confidence; and then, telling her it was time that they should return to the house, he inquired the number of her room, and its position in the building; saying to her that, on the following night, he would visit her there, in order to instruct her how to spend her time in the future, so as to prepare herself to occupy the position of Mother Superior, in her own turn, when she should be a little older and more experienced.

Meanwhile, the wily priest kept his arm around Sister Theresa, and, walking thus to the house, he gave her what he called the kiss of peace, at parting, and each sought their own room; the former feeling assured that he had gained a victory; the latter, as she had never done before in all her life; her soul a sea of tumultuous emotion. The Father General soon fell asleep and dreamed of beautiful nuns and bowers of roses; the unhappy Sister Theresa laid awake for hours, tossing restlessly upon her couch. She felt that she was caught in the coils of the priest, and that it was as useless for her to struggle against what seemed to be her inevitable destiny, as for the poor fly, caught in the meshes of the spider's web, to attempt to escape its impending fate. She felt that she was powerless in the hands of an all-powerful foe; and, though she deeply regretted having kept the appointment, and met the Father in the garden, yet, strange to say, she did not after all wish to avoid the meeting on the following night. In truth, the arch magician had infused his poison into her young soul; and his foul necromancy had thrown a spell upon her, which she no longer desired, or had the strength, to break. She was doomed, and yet she trembled not; she was in chains, and still she hugged those chains to her breast, and seemed to delight in wearing them. The priest had silenced her monitory fears; had thrown her off her guard; had awakened feelings of gratitude, which were easily transmuted to others of a warmer nature; and the hellish work was well nigh completed—the consummation waited but for the occasion.

Oh, ye self-annointed, self-exalted priests, that put yourselves "above all that is called God, or that is worshipped;" "sitting in the temple of God, showing yourselves that ye are God;" "whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness;" ye "false prophets;" ye "ravening wolves in sheep's clothing;" ye "blind guides," that "compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and, when he is made, ye make him two-fold more the child of hell than yourselves;" ye smooth-faced hypocrites that devour virgin innocence, "and, for a pretence, make long prayers;" ye priests, that work your damning deeds, in the dark shrouding of the midnight hour; and then, with unblushing countenance, go forth in broad day, and look honesty in the eye; when the disparting veil of eternity shall be drawn aside, and the judgment trump shall summon you to stand before the dread bar of Him whose searching gaze now penetrates your convent walls, your monastic cells, your dark hiding-holes, where works "the mystery of iniquity," and reads all your damnable crimes as though they stood emblazoned in the face of the noontide sun; ah! how will ye quail then! how will ye seek to escape the fearful inspection of that hour, in the presence of a congregated universe, and unbidden try to hide yourselves, and your hellish deeds, in the depths of eternal night! But know, "ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, ye cannot escape the damnation of hell;" "the Lord shall consume you with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy you with the brightness of his coming." Babylon "shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her."

CHAPTER XII.

Interregnum—The family of Mr. Moreton—Discussion on the education given in boarding-schools.

THE reader must now suffer himself to be carried forward over an interval of three years, and be presented to an interesting family circle, whose members will have a large share in the scenes of the following pages.

Mr. and Mrs. Moreton were the parents of an interesting family, consisting of two sons and three daughters, living in the town of ——, in the state of Pennsylvania, about eighty miles from the city of New York.

Mary, the eldest of the five children, was a handsome brunette, just entered into her seventeenth year, and had been wholly educated in her native town. Julia, the next in age, was fourteen, and gifted with strong natural powers of mind, but not as handsome as her sister Mary. Mrs. Moreton was a lady of excellent judgment and refined manners, but, like her husband,—who was a merchant, in very comfortable circumstances—not a member of any church. Having received a better education than her companion, she had, in matters of this sort, acquired considerable influence over him; while, with the sagacity and prudence of a business man, he looked narrowly to the expenses, and was, to a certain extent, liable to the charge of penuriousness; yet he dearly loved his family, and was willing to incur any reasonable outlay, for anything he thought would promote their happiness, or secure their advancement in life.

One winter evening, after tea, when the young children had been sent to the nursery, Mary having gone to a party at a neighbour's, and Julia being seated at a table by herself, engaged in preparing her lessons for the next day, Mr. and Mrs. Moreton were sitting in their snug back parlour, by a blazing fire, talking over domestic matters, when the following conversation occurred between them:

"I think, Mr. Moreton, that we ought to send Julia to a good boarding school. She is fast growing up to womanhood; her teachers here cannot instruct her much further; and, besides, there are many advantages to be enjoyed at such a school, which she cannot possibly have at home."

"Why so? Have we not good teachers in our town, as good as any where else? I am sure that Mr. Treadwell has advanced Julia very rapidly; and I heard you tell Mrs. Winslow, the other day, that she had learned more, in the same length of time, under his instruction, than from any other teacher to whom she had ever been sent."

"Very true, my dear, and yet I discover that Julia is greatly interrupted in her studies, by the company which her sister receives; and when visitors are in the drawing-room with Mary, Julia seems to think it very hard, indeed, that she must sit up stairs, and study. I find, too, that her head is full of dress, and jewellery, and parties, and beaux, young as she is; and, when she passes through the streets on her way to school, she sees a great deal to divert her mind from her books. Besides, these mixed schools may do well enough for younger children, but Julia is too old to go any longer to one where boys and girls are taught together. In short, I think it high time that she should be sent from home, to a good boarding school, for at least two years."

"Well, but I do not see what you would gain by sending her to such a school, even on your own showing. Will she not be as fond of dress there as here, and will she not find quite as much to distract her mind from study?"

"Certainly not. In a well-regulated boarding school, every thing is taken care of, and provided for, even to the minutest details. Extravagance in dress, and fondness of display, are discouraged as much as possible; and, indeed, there are no incentives or opportunities for either, since the young ladies are seldom seen upon the streets, and the visits of young men are forbidden: while, on the other hand, by means of a systematic arrangement of time—a useful occupation being found for every hour;—the presence of teachers of the very best abilities, who have adopted the business as a profession, and not as a merely temporary means of support; and the stimulus to study which is furnished by the competition of a number of schoolmates, for the honours of the institution, a healthful ambition is excited, and habits are formed, which not only greatly facilitate the acquirements of a thorough education, but are of essential service in after days, when school-books are laid aside, and the sterner duties of life make hourly demands upon our industry, patience, and fortitude."

"And still it seems to me that, if the same system and discipline were established at home, which you say are to be met with in these boarding schools, and whose importance I readily admit, the same results might be secured, and certainly at much less expense."

"Impossible, Mr. Moreton! how can I, in the midst of home distractions, and with such a family as I have, adopt any such course? The house is to be kept; the younger children are to be attended to; company to be entertained; visits to be returned; Mary requires a large share of my time and care; for her education, conducted entirely at home, is exceedingly defective; and this reminds me of one most important advantage that is derived from these schools,—the early formation of habits of *self-reliance.* Now, you know what a baby Mary is; and yet she is seventeen. She cannot move without me, All day long it is, 'Ma, show me how to do this;'—'Ma, do go to such a place with me, or out shopping;'—'Ma, will you fix my hair, or adjust my dress?'—'Ma, will you just go into the parlour with me to see my company? I cannot go alone.' I do verily believe that it would be the same thing if she were married, and that she would not be willing to go to housekeeping without me. It is not so with Miss Ramsey, or Miss Paterson, who were both playmates of Mary's, when they were children, and you know that they were educated at boarding schools. They were amiable, modest, and accomplished young ladies; and yet they make their own dresses; assist their mother in keeping house; are handy at almost every thing; are always self-possessed and agreeable in their manners; and, for all I can see, love their parents just as fondly as Mary does hers; while they are not dependent upon their mammas, as she is upon me. I do not know what Mary would do if I were to be taken away from her, or what she will do when she is married."

"Well, my dear, I see you have thought a great deal more about these things than I have; and I am therefore willing to try the experiment, next spring, for one session. If the result is satisfactory, we will continue Julia at some good boarding-school until she graduates; if not, she must come home, and finish her education here."

"But, Mr. Morton, believe me, that is not the way to try the experiment, as you call it; it does not afford time enough to do the matter justice; and I really believe that one session only would be both time and money thrown away. Send her with the expectation of continuing for one year, or not at all."

"Be it so, then; but where shall we send her? Have you made choice of any school, in your mind?"

"I have been thinking of two schools; but really so far as I have any means of judging, there appears to be but little, if any, difference between them. Both have their ministers of high standing, who have employed, as assistants, the best teachers, I am told, within their reach; and have equal facilities, I suppose, for the education of those who may be sent to them. The one is at Philadelphia, and the other near New York; and, as the former is rather more convenient for us, as well as cheaper than the other, I should prefer it:—besides, it is in our own State."

"Ah!—these Protestant schools are too expensive for me, my dear; I cannot afford to send Julia to one of them. Why not send her to one of the Catholic schools?"

"Mr. Morton, you astonish me!—Send her to a Catholic school! Would you have our Julia to be made a Catholic?"

"And why, pray, should that be the result? I do not see that it follows, as a necessary result."

"It may not as a necessary result, but it appears to me to be a very natural one. I must confess that my Protestant education inclines me to look upon Romish institutions with a very suspicious eye; and my observation in life has but confirmed my prejudice on this subject, if prejudice it can be properly termed. Did not Miss Williams, after having been at a Catholic school for about a year, write home to her mother, for permission to be baptized by a priest, and join the church? And you recollect that Miss Beaumont, when at our house, on her way to the nunnery school, where she had been for a year or two, told you that she believed the Roman Catholic to be the only true religion; giving as her reason that it was more probable that the translation of the Bible, which was made by the Pope and his Cardinals, should be truer than that made by one man, King James of England; and when you asked her where she had got that precious piece of information, she replied that sister Agatha had told her so. And yet the parents of both these young ladies are strict Protestants, and members of the Presbyterian Church. You, doubtless, remember, too, to have heard, also, of a young lady, whose name I do not recollect, but who was the daughter of Protestant parents, and who, having graduated at a Catholic school, determined to become a nun, and refused to leave the institution, even to pay a farewell visit to her friends, before separating herself for ever from them. Indeed I have never conversed with Protestants who had been educated by Catholic teachers, that would suffer one word to be said, in their hearing, in disparagement of that church. Now all this confirms me in the fear that, if our daughter should be sent to a Catholic school, she will either, become a member of that faith, or be so weakened in her attachment to her own, as seriously to be injured by it, if, indeed, the result do not tend to infidelity."

"Well, my dear, you are certainly very eloquent on the subject, and yet you have failed to convince me that your fears have any other foundation than prejudice; and while, if I thought there was any real danger, I should be quite as unwilling as yourself to expose Julia to it, I am convinced, I must give my preference to that school which costs the least, provided the educational advantages are equal, and I presume they are. I therefore prefer that Julia should go to the nunnery school."

"It does seem to me, Mr. Moreton, that there must be some mistake as to the superior cheapness of the Catholic schools, *in fact*, while I admit that *in appearance* they are so. Are you sure that they are cheaper in the end?"

"I have seen and compared the circulars put forth by both sides; and certainly so far as these, in their respective statements of terms, &c., afford proper data upon which to form an opinion, the Catholic schools seem to have the decided advantage: but I am aware that, after all, it is exceedingly difficult to arrive at the truth of the matter in this way. The only sure method of determining the question, is to compare the bill as made out and paid at the close of the sessions."

"Yes—and I know that many parents have been greatly disappointed when they called for their bills, and found them so much higher than they had expected, by reason of *extra charges*, as more than to equal the difference in the apparent cost of education at these Catholic schools, as set forth in these circulars. And then, there is such a thing, you know, as finding a cheap article of little real value after you have bought it, when a small addition to the outlay at the time of purchase would have bought one infinitely superior, and of permanent worth.

"Well, my dear, it grows late: suppose we defer the further consideration of this matter for a few days, until I shall return from New York, where I must go, next week, for goods."

So saying, the subject was dropped for the present; and, Mary having returned from the party, after a lively conversation upon the incidents of the evening that she had spent at their neighbour's, the family retired for the night.

CHAPTER XIII.

Mr. Moreton visits New York—His conversation with Mr. Vandusen—Its effect upon Mr. Moreton—Mr. Vandusen's letter to the Mother Superior.

During the following week, Mr. Moreton went to New York, to purchase goods; and, while sitting in the counting-room of Messrs. Vandusen and Co., with whom he dealt largely, waiting for his bills to be made out, the senior partner remarked to him—

"By the way, Mr. Moreton, you have a family, have you not?"

"Yes, sir," was the reply—"a wife and five children; three of whom are daughters."

"Where are you educating them?" asked the merchant.

"The oldest has finished her education," returned Mr. Moreton—"but the next oldest ought to be sent to a boarding-school somewhere, and I must confess I am greatly at a loss where to place her. I would like to send her to the Catholic school at Bethlehem, because it is so much cheaper than our Protestant schools; but Mrs. Moreton is so opposed to trusting her daughter in the hands of the Catholics, that I do not like to say positively she shall go there."

"It is very natural, indeed, that the women should feel thus opposed to these Catholic schools. My wife, for instance, was violently opposed to them; but they are, after all, the best schools, my dear sir, depend upon it. Our oldest daughter has been for two years at the convent school, some fifty miles from this city; notwithstanding the opposition of her mother, who reluctantly yielded to my wishes in the matter; and I assure you that she is making most astonishing progress in her studies. Mrs. Vandusen, finding this to be the case, has become quite reconciled, and now sees the folly of her former dislike to these institutions."

"But you have a very excellent boarding school in your own city, I am told, conducted by a Presbyterian minister; I should have thought that you would have patronized that school, as you belong to that denomination," remarked Mr. Moreton, in an interrogative tone.

"So I do belong to that denomination, my dear sir, but I do not feel as if I were under any obligation, for that reason, to pay fifty per cent. more for the education of my daughter at a Presbyterian school, than I would have to pay at one belonging to the Catholics. These Protestant schools are too high for me, Mr. Moreton; I cannot stand their unconscionable prices."

"That is just what I told Mrs. Moreton;"—was the reply, in a tone that evinced the gratification of the speaker at finding that he was not mistaken in his views, as expressed to his wife; for he was exceedingly tenacious of his opinions—"but she was under the impression that the *extras* which are charged in the bills, made the Catholic schools the most expensive, after all."

"It is a mistake, my dear sir, depend upon it,"—said the merchant—"at least such has not been my experience; and the 'truth of the pudding'—you know the rest. I surely ought to know all about it, after two years' experience."

Mr. Moreton felt perfectly satisfied upon the point of expense, but asked Mr. Vandusen to tell him, candidly, what he thought about the efforts of the priests and nuns to proselyte Protestant children to the Romish faith; and whether he had any reason to believe that they had tampered with the religious faith of his daughter.

"It is all humbug, sir;"—replied the latter, with some warmth of manner,—"the result of sectarian bigotry. I am astonished, as a practical man, that sensible people should have raised such a hue and cry about the proselyting disposition of the Catholics. I assure you that I do not believe a word of it."

Mr. Moreton thanked the merchant for his information, and expressed his determination to send his daughter, the next spring, to the Catholic school at Bethlehem.

"But," replied Mr. Vandusen, "is not that too near home, sir? My advice to you would be, not to send your daughter where she would be anxious to come home every week, because it was so short a distance to travel, and where she would be dissatisfied if she did not get to visit her friends frequently; but to place her at school at such a distance as to make it inconvenient for her to go home oftener than once in six months, since her mind would be undisturbed by the proximity of her relations, and her progress in her studies would consequently be the greater;" and assured Mr. Moreton that he considered the school to which he sent his own daughter, the very best in all the country.

Convinced by his arguments, Mr. Moreton thanked the merchant again, and, having settled his bills, bade him farewell, and returned to the hotel where he was stopping.

No sooner had he left the counting-room, than Mr. Vandusen, with great glee expressed in his countenance, sat down at his desk, and wrote the following letter, which he despatched to the post office.

"*New York, December* 6, 1810.

"To the Mother Superior of the Convent of the Annunciation.

"Dear Madam,

"I have just had a long conversation with one of my customers, a Mr. Charles Moreton, of Pennsylvania. He is a wealthy merchant, having two daughters to be educated; one of whom he will no doubt send to you next spring; and the other, in due time, if he should be pleased. I found his head full of the usual notions about *extras*, and *proselyting*, and all that, but succeeded in sweeping the cobwebs from his brain. I think you may certainly calculate upon his bringing you his daughter in the spring. When she arrives, you will credit my account with twenty dollars, according to our contract. I hope my daughter's health is good, and that she progresses well in her studies. The affair of the ——— comes on swimmingly. I shall, without doubt, get that money secured to the order.

"With the highest consideration, I remain

"Your unworthy servant,

"CONRAD VANDUSEN."

CHAPTER XIV.

Mr. Moreton's sanguine partiality to Catholic schools—Mrs. Moreton's fears and doubts—Julia sent as a boarder to the Convent of the Annunciation—Mr. and Mrs. Moreton attend the first examination—Engaging manners of the Mother Superior—Extras—The parents receive alarming intelligence—Distress and anxiety—Mr. Moreton hastens to snatch his child from her impending doom—Arrives at the Convent, and demands to see his daughter—Falsehood and treachery of the Mother Superior—Julia rushes into her father's arms, and is borne by him from the hatred Convent.

WHEN Mr. Moreton returned home, he related to his wife the conversation which had taken place between himself and Mr. Vandusen; laying great stress upon the fact that the latter was a member of the Presbyterian Church,—than which none had a more inveterate hostility towards the Catholics, or had done more to expose the errors of their doctrines, or the enormity of their practices; and, as he said, it spoke volumes in refutation of the slanders which had been heaped upon the Catholics, that a Presbyterian should bear such testimony as he had borne to the excellence of the convent school, the cheapness of its terms, and the absence of intention or effort to proselyte the children of Protestant parents. Withal, the fact that he was sending his own daughter to this same school, and his highly respectable standing as a merchant, forbade the idea of any insincerity, or want of sufficient intelligence upon the subject.

Still Mrs. Moreton was not convinced, in spite of all this array of imposing testimony; and, while her husband gently insinuated that she was very obstinate in her prejudices, she could not wholly rid her mind of apprehension, or be brought to believe that there was no real danger incurred in sending Julia to a Catholic school.

But finding that it was useless to argue the matter any further with Mr. Moreton, she reluctantly yielded the point; hoping that she might be able to fortify Julia's mind so strongly against the wiles and sophistry of a crafty priesthood, so that she might safely pass the fiery ordeal which she fully believed was about to be placed before her child; and when, in the following spring, the time fixed for the departure of Julia with her father for the convent school, arrived; and the vehicle which bore them away, receded from her view, she returned from the street door into her sitting room, with a heavy heart; feeling as though a dark cloud, surcharged with evil, had gathered over herself and family.

On his return, after having placed Julia at school, his wife had a thousand anxious questions to be answered; all of which he answered so readily, and with such apparent satisfaction to himself, that her fears were quieted, and hope gained the ascendant. He informed her that, on their arrival at the convent, after a fatiguing but rather pleasant journey of four days, the Mother Superior, whom he represented as a lovely French woman, in the prime of life, and of most elegant manners, received him with the greatest kindness, and throwing her arms around Julia, kissed her affectionately, welcoming her to the institution, and promising to be a mother to her, while she continued there; that Julia had found one or two old acquaintances among the pupils, and seemed to be satisfied; and that, on his expressing a wish that his daughter's principles should in no way be interfered with, she assured him, in the most frank and positive manner, that he need not entertain any fears on that subject, as they had no desire to make proselytes of the children of Protestant parents.

"In short," added Mr. Moreton, "she is one of the most agreeable ladies I have ever met with; and I feel well assured that our daughter is placed in good hands."

Five months passed away, and the summer vacation came on. Mr. Moreton and his lady had attended the examination; and, although Julia's progress did not meet their expectation, yet they supposed that this might be attributed to the novelty of the position in which she had been placed—away from home, among strangers, for the first time in her life—and they indulged the hope that she would do better, the next session.

On calling for his bill, he was surprised to find that it was larger than he had anticipated. There was so much charged as an *extra* item for this, and so much for that; so much for fuel, and for room rent, and for stationery, and for medical attendance, although she had not been sick an hour during the entire time; and so much for store goods, &c.; amounting in all to some thirty or forty per cent. more than he had expected. Unwilling, however, to dispute the account; fascinated as he was by the elegant manners of the Mother Superior, and gratified by the deference and respect which were shown to himself and wife, by all the inmates of the family, he paid the bill, without a word of complaint; resolving in his own mind, that for the future, he would take care to avoid all extras, by furnishing every thing from home, as far as practicable, and by prohibiting the opening of store accounts for his daughter's use. Besides, he prided himself, as a business man, upon his tact and foresight; and, Mrs. Moreton being present, when the settlement was made with the accountant, though she was engaged in conversation with the Mother Superior, he was very unwilling that she should know that he had been outwitted; especially when so much had been said on this very point, prior to placing Julia in the institution.

Julia appeared pleased to revisit her home; but her mother was pained to find that she did not manifest as great an attachment to it, as before leaving it for school; and that she more than once wished for the time to come when her father was to take her back. She found, too, that her daughter loved to talk of the Mother Superior, and of sister this, and sister that, frequently extolling their great kindness to her, their piety, and their happy condition; seeming to think that the life of a nun was the very beau-ideal, with her, of human happiness on earth. When Mrs. Moreton would attempt to combat this notion, she found Julia disposed to be wayward, and to resent the attempt as an insult, by implication, offered to those whom she so highly esteemed. Knowing her impulsive nature, however, and how every novelty that pleased her was wont to effect her mind, she thought this a mere girlish effervescence of momentary excitement, and that after a while, when the novelty had worn off, she would see things in a truer light.

At length came the day for Julia's return to school; and her mother, having given her much excellent advice, and made her promise to write, either to herself or to her father, once a fortnight, bade her adieu. Arrived at the convent, Mr. Moreton and Julia were received with similar demonstrations of kindness to those which had marked their first reception, while there seemed to be more of familiar cordiality in the attentions paid to them; and the former, having given the necessary instructions as to his daughter's expenses, left her; congratulating himself that he had effectually guarded against heavy bills, for the future.

The second session had expired, during which Julia's letters had been received regularly, in keeping with her promise; and, there being no vacation between that and the ensuing session, she did not come home, her father's business engagements preventing him from going to her; but, as her mother's anxiety about her was greatly quieted by the regularity with which her letters arrived, and the improvement both in style and penmanship which they indicated, it was determined that she should remain for the third term.

But after Julia had been thus at school, fifteen months, and when her parents were congratulating themselves upon the selection which they had made of a school for her—albeit Mr. Moreton had ascertained, beyond all question, that in point of economy he had gained nothing, since it had cost him something more, at this professedly cheap school, for the education of his daughter, thus far, than it would have cost him at Protestant schools, which had been denounced as being so unconscionably extravagant in their charges; a letter was received from Julia, which filled their minds with dismay and deep anxiety for the future. It was written at great length, evidently with studied care, and in a style so wholly different from her former letters, or from anything that might have been reasonably expected of her, as to convince them that she had not written it herself, but copied it from the dictation of others.

After thanking her parents, in very measured terms, for their care and affection hitherto manifested towards her, and particularly for having placed her at the convent school, where she had enjoyed so rare advantage, and spent the happiest period of her existence—she proceeded to state that, without any efforts having been made, on the part of her teachers, to bias her mind, or to change her religious faith, she had become convinced that the Catholic was the only true faith; that all beside was heresy; and that she felt it to be her imperative duty to join the Catholic church, and, at the proper age, to become a nun; but that the *respect*—that was the cold word which she addressed to her kind and affectionate parents—the respect which she entertained for them, constrained her to ask their consent, before she took so important a step—adding, that she hoped they would not withhold this, since, in that event, she must obey God rather than man, and should proceed, in spite of their refusal, None but those who live only for their children, and feel that these constitute the end and object of all their plans and purposes, can imagine the feelings which rushed tumultuously into the bosoms of the father and mother, as they perused this harrowing letter. They seemed to themselves to have been sleeping, in fancied security, on the very brink of a frightful precipice, and to have suddenly awakened to find it crumbling under them, and ready to carry them with it, in its headlong plunge into the yawning abyss beneath. The mother sat in speechless grief; while the scalding tears ran down her cheeks. The father, feeling that his own penuriousness had rendered him deaf to the warnings of his wife, when her fears led her, in the outset, to deprecate the step that had wrought this mischief, was self-reproached and self-condemned; yet, recollecting that the interposition of his authority might and could avert the impending evil, did not give way to his feelings, but stood pale, stern, and with contracted brow, thinking what course he had best pursue. For some minutes, neither uttered a word.

It was noon—and the untasted meal had for some time stood unnoticed on the board: no member of that unusually so happy family felt any inclination to partake of it. There they sat, as if death, or worse than death, had snatched away one beloved of all. At length the mother, with a strong effort, broke the painful silence, and said, in the tones of one nerved by urgent resolution to a decisive step.

"Mr. Moreton, we must go to Julia. She cannot resist the appeal of a mother's love. We will save her yet."

"We will start at once," was the prompt reply of the determined father; and, giving immediate orders that the carriage should be got ready, they were soon on their way to rescue their child fom the imminent ruin which threatened.

Having travelled as rapidly as possible, they arrived at the convent, in the afternoon of the third day from home; and, while the mother remained in the carriage at the outside gate, in accordance with the plan which had been previously adopted for their government, Mr. Moreton hastened up the long avenue, heavily shaded with large forest trees, through which it wound its tortuous way—fit emblem of the practices of those who dwelt within that dark and gloomy pile of imprisonment and shame; and, knocking at the hall-door, demanded to see the Superior. The sister porter invited him into the parlour, where presently he was joined by the lady whose elegant manners had so fascinated his judgment, on their first interview, but whom he was now disposed to regard as the most treacherous of her sex; since she had betrayed the sacred trust committed to her hands by confiding parents, for he could not doubt that this woman was at the bottom of his daughter's defection.

She met him with unusual affability, and an appearance of the utmost gratification at seeing him; and was proceeding to make inquiry as to the health of Mrs. Moreton and the family, when he interrupted her by saying,—

"I wish to see my daughter, madam."

With a most winning smile upon her countenance, the Superior replied—

"I regret very much that you cannot now see Julia, sir; she has been somewhat indisposed, but has fallen asleep: and it would be injurious to her to awake her."

Satisfied that this was a mere ruse, on the part of the Superior, to gain time, or to accomplish some other purpose of her own, the indignant father, throwing off the restraint which, until this moment, he had maintained upon himself, cried, in tones of great excitement:

"My daughter, Madam; I want my daughter. Where is she?"

"You cannot see your daughter, sir," replied the Superior, with cool self-possession, still retaining a bland smile upon her countenance. "She is ill in bed, and cannot be seen."

"I am her father, and must see her;"—and, as he thus spoke, with increased energy of manner, he took a step forward, as though he would force his way to the apartment of his daughter.

The Superior, however, anticipating his purpose, instantly rose, and, intercepting him, stood full in his way, between him and the door. Then, drawing herself up to her full height, while she assumed an air of offended dignity,—a slight flush of excitement playing upon her really beautiful countenance,—answered quietly, but firmly—

"I rule here, sir; and I say to you that you cannot see your daughter. I say to you, further, that *she* does not wish to see *you*."

"Does not wish to see her father? What does this mean?"—inquired Mr. Moreton, his whole manner indicating the greatest surprise and agitation of soul.

"Because she has renounced you, together with all the vain ties of this sinful world, and claims the protection of this sanctuary;"—haughtily answered the Superior.

"It is false!"—thundered the outraged parent, who, now wrought up to the highest pitch of excitement, was about to push the Superior aside, and would doubtless have committed some act of violence, but, just at this moment, his daughter, who had by some means learned the arrival of her father, or heard his voice in altercation with the Mother Superior, rushed into the room, her dress greatly disordered, and, passing by the latter, who tried in vain to arrest her, threw herself into his arms, crying, in accents which thrilled to his inmost soul—"Father, save me! O, save me!"

Clasping her to his bosom with an energy that mocked all interference, for he was a powerful man, the father cast a look of proud defiance upon the no longer mild and placid Superior—who, with the countenance of a demon, and the eye of an infuriated tigress, that had just had snatched from her jaws the prey which she was about to share with the whelps, advanced as though she would tear Julia from the grasp of her natural protector;—and, pushing her outstretched arm aside, hastened with the almost fainting child to her mother; who, meanwhile, too remote to see or to hear what had passed, waited in great anxiety the return of her husband to the carriage.

The reader can imagine how pleasant was the surprise to Mrs. Moreton, and what must have been the revulsion of her feelings, when Julia, throwing herself upon her bosom, and putting her arms around her neck, cried, in a voice almost choked with emotion—"Forgive me, my dearest mother; I will never leave you again."

Driving rapidly away, Mr. Moreton went to the neighbouring village, where he handed to a friend a sum of money necessary to pay his daughter's bill at the convent, together with an order for the delivery of her clothing; and then turned his horses' heads towards home.

CHAPTER XV.

Julia's narrative—Specious and artful conduct of the Mother Superior—How the letter was wrote.

During the journey homeward, and after they had reached that dear spot,—over which had so recently gathered thick gloom and deep sorrow, but where sunshine and gladness now reigned,—Julia related to her parents what had transpired during the time that she had spent at the convent school, the most prominent of which is here summarily laid before the reader.

It seems that, on her arrival at the convent, when first brought there by her father, Julia became a great favourite, both with the nuns and with the boarders. Her vivacity, her talent at repartee, her general amiability, and her studiousness, gained the respect, and won the affection, of all, from the Mother Superior down to the lowest menial. The former soon fixed upon her as a suitable subject of which to make a useful and valuable acquisition to the order; and, with the quick perception of a strong mind trained under Jesuit influence, readily discovered the prominent traits in her disposition, and devised the plan by means of which she might best accomplish her design; yet, with all the cunning and wariness of her class, she so completely disguised her real purpose, that Julia only became aware of it at the very last moment, as it were, and then only through the instrumentality of one who had previously fallen a victim to the same artifice, and who perished in the same coils.

During the first session of the school, the Mother Superior did nothing more than gain the affections of the young girl; well knowing that this must be a first step, and that with these her confidence would be acquired as a necessary consequence. In order to do this, she treated her with distinguished kindness; allowing her many privileges which were not granted to others; and encouraging her frequent visits, in the evenings, to her private parlour—save when the Father General came to see her—where she was sure to find something nice to eat, and something that would interest her mind; her taste in both respects being carefully consulted. She placed in the hands of Julia, rare and beautiful pictures, representing the miracles and prominent incidents in the lives of the Saints of the Church and would have her to read aloud interesting passages from their history. She would also speak to Julia of these; while the silvery notes of her voice would fall like sweet music upon the ear, and the girl's enthusiastic soul would be enrapt by the magic of her discriptive and narrative powers. All day long, Julia's studies were enlivened, and her tasks made lighter, by the anticipation of spending an evening in the Superior's private apartment, where every thing was so snug and so comfortable.

But all this time not a word was said about the peculiar dogmas of the Romish religion, save in the most careless, and, as it were, accidental manner; not a disrespectful allusion to the Protestant faith was pronounced at all, it was with the utmost apparent kindness of feeling, and with the greatest show of consideration for those who bore it. Neither was Julia required to comply, at any time, with Romish forms and usages, further than was generally expected from all Protestant pupils; but, if a peculiarly interesting or imposing service was to be performed, her curiosity to witness it was aroused, beforehand, by slow and gradual approaches which wholly concealed from view the real object; and, after it was over, it would be introduced in the most natural manner imaginable, as a topic of conversation, and so as to lead an ardent and imaginative mind to inquire into its purport.

Thus, without appearing to seek it, frequent opportunity was afforded for the explanation of Catholic dogmas, and their implanation in Julia's tender mind, before she was aware of it. No wonder, then, if with such a nature as hers, impulsive, confiding, and enthusiastic; fond of novelty, and delighting in excitement; with so much around her to furnish aliment for her mental appetites; and, added to all this, the presence of a master spirit—wise, strongwilled, unscrupulous—which knew well how to control and adjust this complicated machinery for the production of the largest results in the accomplishment of its own occult purposes; Julia should have been so fully, yet unconsciously, trained by the Mother Superior, in the short space of five months, as to be made to think and feel just as the latter might will that she should; and to be ripe for the development of her plans, on Julia's return from home, at the close of the summer vacation. No wonder, too, that, under the circumstances of false colouring which had been thrown around her, she should regard the life of a nun as being the fullest embodiment of human felicity; as all sunshine, without an obscuring cloud, or fitting rack, to dim for an instance its brightness.

On her return from home, however, after the vacation, the rich politician, into whose hands the unwary girl had so unfortunately fallen, began to narrow the circle of her toils, and to bring them to bear more directly upon the focal point of her schemings. The first object to be accomplished was to destroy her confidence in her own religious faith; and although this had, to a certain extent, been covertly but successfully, done, yet the completion of the work was to be cautiously effected, or great mischief to the plans of the Superior might be the result. The social evenings spent in her room afforded suitable opportunities for this; and, as it was more than likely that Julia would not return home before the expiration of ten months, time was not wanting. Besides, how really easy the task with a young girl who had been so imperfectly instructed, as she necessarily was, in the principles of her faith. Before the third month had elapsed, the endwas gained:—Protestantism was rejected, and it became a light affair to substitute Romanism in its stead. On the day before the session closed, Julia was baptized in the chapel, and became a member of the Roman Catholic church.

All this time, there had been no compulsion. Led in silken fetters, Julia never for a moment supposed that she was captive to the iron will of another, but seemed to herself to have taken step by step, wholly of her own accord; until not only was effected what we have seen, but she had been made to believe that it was right and proper to conceal from her parents what had occurred.

Nay, more, that it was right and proper to deceive them as to the true state of her feelings, and make them conclude, from the tenor of her letters, that she was still a firm adherent to the faith of her ancestors; "the end—your devotion to the service of God and the Virgin," said the Mother Superior—"will sanctify the means;" —the deception of her best friends, her parents.

Now that she was a member of the Catholic church, she was more than ever in the power of the Superior, and subject to her control; while the latter, in her turn, found increased means of exercising that power, in the imposing ceremonies, the mystic symbols, the thrilling music, the demoralizing confessional, and the constant appeals made to the innate superstition of poor fallen human nature; indeed, in all that pertains to the ritual of that church. In these, Julia found excitement; in these, therefore, she took an enthusiastic delight; and whenever, on the reception of a letter from home, or from any other cause, old associations and old attachments would linger about the hearthstone of memory, and rekindle its embers, the Mother Superior, from whom she concealed nothing, would promptly but adroitly smother them, until she became completely weaned from all that were once most dear to her; and her great anxiety now was not to be recalled home, from the scenes and pursuits in which her happiness seemed to be so completely involved.

She was now in a fit state of mind to be influenced to take the remaining steps, and to be made a permanent member of the family in which she resided; in other words, to become a nun. As this was a step, however, in which she could be forcibly controlled by her parents, at least until she was of age; and as the Mother Superior had now gained all that was immediately necessary to the ultimate accomplishment of her great design; she determined to await the close of the ensuing session, which was to be her last, before anything further should be done; and, meanwhile, to do all in her power to confirm and establish Julia in her new faith.

Thus things progressed until within a few weeks of the termination of the third session, when the Mother Superior, having prepared a letter which she thought would answer the purpose, placed it in Julia's hands to be copied. After numerous alterations and corrections, which suggested themselves from time to time, had been made, this letter was finally sent to Mr. Moreton, but, by some unaccountable detention in the post office, did not reach him as soon as it should have done, by at least ten days. This delay was the salvation of Julia, as will be shown in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XVI.

Sister Theresa, her sufferings and death—Her dying warning to Julia—Its effect upon Julia—The Mother Superior's rage in the chamber of death—The Father General's base scheme to enrich the order—The Mother Superior in a dilemma.

It appears, from Julia's recital to her parents, that, while rambling over the convent building, one day, she found, lying upon a pallet of straw, with ragged and insufficient bed-clothing spread over her, in a small room, in a remote and rather unoccupied portion of the vast pile, a poor nun, whose countenance bore the traces of great beauty, but who was fearfully wasted by disease and suffering. Discovering, on conversing with her, that she was greatly neglected by the members of the household, Julia requested, and obtained, permission, from the Mother Superior, to visit this nun, which was the more readily granted because the latter really knew nothing about the true condition of one who had long been lost sight of by her as an helpless and ruined victim, save as her name was from time to time reported upon the sick list. From that day on until the poor nun died, Julia spent an hour or more by her bed-side, every day, and occasionally sat up with her, a portion of the night. Her kindness to Sister Theresa—for that was the name of this poor nun, whom the reader will recollect as having had an interview with the Father General, in the convent garden at midnight—soon won her grateful affection; and, as her light footsteps would be heard daily ascending the stairs on her errand of mercy, Theresa's countenance would beam with gladness. Sometimes, when Julia would be seated by her bed-side, she would look up in her face, with a smile of heartfelt gratitude, and would press her hand earnestly, while the big tears would start to her eye, and trickle down her cheek, as she whispered a prayer to the Virgin, for blessings on her benefactress.

On the morning of the very day upon which Mr. Moreton reached the convent, as related in the chapter preceding the last, Julia paid her usual visit to her patient, as she called her, and was alarmed to find her a great deal worse than she had been previously. Taking her by the hand, Sister Theresa said to her, in tones of deep emotion,—"Dear Julia, I am dying: I feel that I cannot live much longer; and because I love you for your love to me, and for your charity to a poor deserted nun, I wish to give you a solemn charge, as from the lips of a dying woman; which it would embitter my last moments to withhold from you, while it is the best return I can make for your exceeding kindness to me. Never consent to become a nun."

Julia started back, as though she had been stung by an adder, and seemed to doubt if she had heard aright, or as if she thought that the poor nun, might be out of her head.

Sister Theresa read her thoughts; and, again taking her hand, and pressing it earnestly in her own, repeated the charge in a still more solemn and impressive manner than before. Julia would have spoken, but the nun said to her —"Listen to me. I had thought that my melancholy story would have died with me; and, indeed, I know not that I shall have strength to relate it to you; yet, deeply indebted to you as I am, I cannot better employ my remaining strength than in communicating that which may save you from a fate like mine. In the narrative which I am about to give you, you will find abundant cause for the charge which has filled your mind with astonishment."

"I am," continued Theresa, "the only child of wealthy parents in the south, who placed me here, some years since, as a pupil in the convent school. For two years after my arrival, the Mother Superior lavished upon me acts of kindness similar to those which she, I know, has exhibited towards yourself and others, and with the same motives. By degrees—for I have not the strength to relate to you all of the particulars—she led me to abandon my own Protestant faith, and to embrace Romanism—until, at the end of the second year, I found myself a novice, fully committed to take the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience—and eventually I became a nun; my parents, however, being kept in profound ignorance of the whole matter, until the final step had been irretrievably taken. My mother, as I have since learned accidentally, when informed of it, took to her bed, and never left it until carried to her grave. My father has more than once applied at the door of the convent, for permission to see me, but without my knowledge, and in my name has been refused; being told that I did not wish to see him; and, when it was too late, I have been told of his visit, for the purpose of harrowing my feelings, and making my sufferings the greater. I know not whether he is yet alive or not." Here Sister Theresa's tears interrupted her narrative; and she was compelled to pause, for a few minutes, while she gave vent to them. Then, resuming the story of her misfortunes, she said—

"After the imposing ceremony, which attending my adopting the religious habit, had been gone through with, and I had time to sit down, and calmly reflect upon what I had done, I found myself a prey to the keenest self-reproaches for my folly, and to irrepressible longings after my home and my dear friends. I found, too, that the manner of the Mother Superior was wholly changed towards me. She no longer invited me to her private parlour, where I had spent so many happy hours. She no longer met me with kind words and loving looks: but, in the place of these, had assumed towards me an aspect of cold and haughty control, and kept me at a most cruel distance. I was subjected to menial offices, to heavy tasks, and to severe penances, which seriously affected my health. I had no amusements, no relaxations—I was cut off from all those associations and endearments after which my heart yearned, and for the enjoyment of which I felt myself qualified by the possession of a warm and generous nature. In short, I was buried alive. In vain I sought for some one into whose bosom I could pour the tale of my sorrows, even among those around me who were as unhappy as I; for so completely were they under the tyrannical control of the Mother Superior, that, when once or twice I sought consolation from this source, my confidence was betrayed, and severe punishment was the consequence. My Father Confessor made dishonourable proposals to me, and I spurned him from me; but the tempter came in the garb of an angel of light, holding the olive branch of friendship in his hand, and with the sweet words of sympathy upon his oily tongue—I could not resist him—and fell. O horrible fall! how fearfully punished! The tempter was the lover of the Mother Superior; she found it out, and, not daring to punish him, although it led to a terrific scene between them, which had like to have resulted in very serious consequences to both, but was at length compromised, and a reconciliation took place; her jealousy and wrath found their mark in me; and my untimely and painful death is the result. But what wonder that I fell beneath the insidious approaches of the wily Father General, who knew all the loneliness of a poor nun's life, the yearnings of her heart after kindness, and the sufferings and bitter disappointments which I had previously endured. What wonder that I should first feel grateful to him who spoke to me the only words of soothing which fell upon my greedy ears; that I should then love him; and then——. But, dear Julia, do not despise me—do not forsake me. I have repented in dust and ashes; I trust there is mercy in heaven for me, who have been so bitterly deceived on earth. For years I have endured a living death; and since my health has failed me, and I have no longer been able to render any service to the establishment—a period of thirteen months, during most of which time I have been confined to my bed—I have been wholly neglected by both the Superior and the nuns, save as necessity required their attention at distant intervals. Even the Father Confessor has visited me but once, and then at my own most urgent request: until you, my dear Julia, accidentally discovered me, and began that series of kindnesses which has lit up the gloom of my sick room, and alleviated my sufferings to so great an extent. God bless you for it, noble-hearted girl!"

It had cost the nun a great effort to make this recital to Julia; and it had been frequently interrupted by a gush of tears, or the hard, dry cough which was rapidly taking her to the grave; and, when she had concluded it, she fell back exhausted on her pallet. Her kind nurse administered some cordials which she had brought with her—the purchase of her own pocket-money—and, after lying quietly for some time, Sister Theresa, turning to her with a countenance upon which the seal of death was legibly impressed, said to her:—

"May heaven reward you, dear Julia, for your goodness; I cannot in any other way than by my poor thanks. But let me most earnestly entreat you to heed the warning which I have given you, in this relation of my sad life since I entered this prison. O, if you would not bring sorrow upon your relations; if you would not have every kindly affection, every generous emotion, every faculty of mind, crushed, and seared and withered—if you would not live with a burning void within your bosom—a craving appetite after friendship, and love, and social happiness, which is doomed never to be satisfied; if you would not witness scenes which curdle the blood, and freeze the very soul—if you would not loath yourself and all about you—if you would not be tempted, as I have been, almost daily, to commit suicide, as affording the only means of escape from conventual pollution and imprisonment—if you would not die, at the last, away from your kindred and friends, deserted by all, as I am—by all but you, whom God seems to have sent to me as an angel of mercy, to pity her whom her race contemns—O! if you would escape all of those evils, aye, ten thousand more; I beseech you, never consent to become—"

"Vile wretch! what means this?" cried, or rather shrieked, the Mother Superior, who, for the first time, alarmed at Julia's long visit to the sick nun, had crept stealthily up stairs, and arrived in time to overhear the last sentence or two of the charge which had just been uttered, or rather so abruptly interrupted by her exclamation. When Julia, almost beside herself with terror, looked around to discover the source from which this interruption came, she beheld the Superior, standing in the doorway, pale with rage, her eye flashing fire, and her hand uplifted as though she would smite the poor victim, lying helpless on the couch of suffering.

But that victim was beyond the reach of her malice—she was dead; and the other, whom she was about to immolate on the altar of religious bigotry, had escaped her coils. The scales had fallen from her eyes; the delusion had been dissipated, as the morning mist; she seemed to have awoke from some dream which had fast bound her senses in illusion, and to have become sensible of the realities which surrounded her, threatening her destruction.

The Mother Superior saw it all at a glance—saw, too, that her passion had betrayed her, and had served to make the matter worse; but, confident in her own abilities, and fondly hoping that she could yet recover the ground which she had lost, set herself about the work, with infinite address. It was, however, too late. Overcome with excess of emotion, Julia sat weeping as if her heart would break. The Superior, putting her arm around her, and gently bidding her arise, left the death-chamber, carefully locking the door behind them, and led her down stairs to her own bed-room, where, laying her upon her own soft couch, she told her to compose herself, and try to sleep. Then, entering the adjoining room, which we have said was fitted up as an oratory, and which contained an escritoire in which she deposited her valuable papers, she took, from a secret drawer, a letter received that morning, and which she perused with great attention. It ran thus:

"*New York, July* 10, 1812.

"To the Mother Superior of the Convent of the Annunciation.

"Dear Madam,

"I have just been informed, by the Father Beaupres, resident at Bâton Rouge, Louisiana, that the father of Emilie de Vere, now the Sister Theresa, a member of the convent under your spiritual government, has recently died, leaving an immense estate, and making provision, by his last will and testament, that his only daughter, this same Emilie, shall inherit 'the whole property, if she will renounce the Roman Catholic faith, and leave the convent in which she is;' and that, in the event of her refusing to do so, the said property shall go to distant relations, in France, the daughter having nothing.

"I wish you to converse with the Sister Theresa, and devise some plan by means of which this inheritance can be secured to the order. I shall repair to the convent on the fifth day from the date of this letter.

"I remain as ever, yours,
"Francois Jubert.
"Father General, &c."

The Mother Superior felt greatly agitated, as she perused this document, and scarcely knew what to do. Here was an immense fortune within the grasp of the order; but she upon whose life it depended, was dead. True, no one knew it as yet, besides herself and Julia; but she had reason to believe that Julia had heard enough, from the lips of the dying nun, to have influenced her mind unfavourably towards the order, and, perhaps, to have undone the entire work of the last fifteen months. O, how deeply she regretted her want of consideration, in permitting Julia to attend upon the sick nun; but so fully had she succeeded, as she thought, in the work that she had planned and executed as regarded the former, and such was the tyrannical dread in which she held every member of the household, that she could not suppose it possible that the latter would have dared to say one word to Julia about the past; until her apprehension having been excited by her pupil's long absence,—for she had not come down to the dinner-table, as usual,—she had ascended to the sick chamber, and there overheard a portion of what passed, as has already been seen. Should Julia, when she went out among the boarders, make known the fact of the nun's death, it would for ever destroy all hope of securing the inheritance; and even if she could prevent this, which would be a very difficult affair, because of the impression that it might make upon her own mind, still the dead body was in the house, and must be disposed of in some way, without the knowledge of any member of the household. She bit her lips in very intensity of thought; and her feelings were wrought up to a high pitch of excitement, by her malignity to the dead nun, who, she feared, had achieved, although unconsciously, a wonderful retribution upon herself and upon the order, for the wrongs which she had endured at their hands; by apprehension that Julia was lost to the convent, unless something could be done to prevent it; and by anxiety to bring order out of this chaos, and victory out of this apparent defeat; when she heard a gentle rap at her chamber door. Instantly passing from the oratory into her bed-room, where Julia still lay upon her couch, she opened the door, where stood a servant to inform her that a gentleman wished to see her in the parlour. Not supposing, for a moment, that it might be Mr. Moreton—whom of all other persons she least wished to see at that time,—she hastened to the room where he awaited her; neglecting, as she left her chamber, to close the door behind her. Presently, Julia, overhearing the altercation between her father and the Superior, and recognising the voice of the former, flew down the stairway, and rushed into her father's arms, as has before been related, and thus escaped from the dangers which were becoming so imminent around her.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Mother Superior outwitted—Cursing and praying—Hasty summons to the Father General—Insulting the dead—Jesuitical conduct.

When Mr. Moreton bore Julia away from the parlour of the convent, the Mother Superior stood in speechless amazement, for an instant, and then, hastening to the front door, watched his rapid progress along the avenue, until he was lost to her sight, when, like one who had been spell-bound under the influence of the night-mare, she seemed to become suddenly aware that something must be done, or Julia, her victim, would be lost to her for ever, and the harvest of all her schemings be destroyed, just at the moment when it was ripe for the sickle of the reaper.

Pulling violently the hall-bell, she ordered the servant who answered the summons, to call two male servants that belonged to the establishment, and were at work in the garden; but whether, during the interval that elapsed before they made their appearance, she had concluded that any further steps would be imprudent, on her part, at that time, or because she thought it too late to attempt to bring back the fugitives, her purposes were changed; for, when the servants came, she dismissed them, and, with a dignified, though somewhat quickened step, ascended the great hall stairs to her private room.

Here, carefully fastening the door, she threw herself at full length upon a lounge, at one side of the room; and, placing her hand upon her forehead, as though she were in pain, while her eyes were almost ready to start from their sockets, she gave vent to the most violent outbursts of passion; bitterly cursing all heretics, and calling down the direst maledictions upon Mr. Moreton and his rescued daughter. And then, her thoughts recurring to the scene which had taken place in the room of the dying nun, she arose hastily from her recumbent position, and strode towards the door, as if she were about to execute some hurriedly-formed purpose; but, ere she had placed her hand upon the fastening, she paused, for a moment, and, retracing her steps, continued to walk from one end of the large apartment to the other, for some length of time; her steps at first rapid and excited, but gradually becoming more measured; until, at length, entering through the secret pannel into her bed-chamber, and thence into the oratory, and kneeling down before the crucifix, she remained for some time with her head bowed in prayer, occasionally heaving a convulsive sob, indicative of the extent to which her feelings had been excited.

Arising presently from her kneeling position, with the traces of tears upon her cheeks, she approached the escritoire, and, drawing forth the necessary materials, wrote a note, of which the following is a copy:

"*Convent of Annunciation, July* 12, 1812.

"To the Reverend Father General.

"Most Reverend and Dear Sir,

"Your favour of the 10th instant was received by me this morning. Business of the utmost importance connected with its contents, requires your presence here without delay. Please lose no time in coming.

"Yours, most respectfully and truly,
"Frances.
"Mother Superior, &c."

Having folded and sealed this note, she returned to her chamber, and pulled hastily the bell-cord which hung near her bed. On a nun appearing, in answer to the summons, she placed the note in her hands, and bade her give it to the Porter, with orders to take it instantly to New York, and, riding day and night, deliver it to the Father General. Then, re-entering the oratory, to see if all were there in a position to be left, she fastened her escritoire, and went up stairs to the death room.

How silent was all there! The cold and pallid remains of the Sister Theresa lay upon the pallet, just as when the Mother Superior had left the room with Julia, after having precipitated the death of the poor nun, by her sudden appearance and harsh exclamation, but a short while before. Although fearfully emaciated and wasted with disease, the death-like features still showed traces of former loveliness; and there sat upon the marble countenance a smile, as though, just at the moment of departure, the penitent had caught a bright vision of Mercy stooping from Heaven to pity and to save.

The Mother Superior stood for a few moments, looking upon the face of the dead, and, catching at length the expression of that smile, ground her teeth with very rage.

"What," said she, as though speaking to the lifeless body—"smiling art thou? Smiling at me, as though thou hadst gained a victory over me? Dost thou mock me, now thou art dead, as thou didst thwart me while living? Would thou were capable of feeling, that I might punish thee, vile remains of a most worthless being. But know, Emilie de Vere, whether thy polluted spirit hovers still in this room, or is suffering purgatorial pain in the regions of woe; know that Louise St. Aubyn has never been defeated yet. She has been cruelly deceived; but she has had her revenge. Aye, and she will yet be still more fully avenged upon the vile paramour that wrought thy fall:—the only virtuous act of all his life. Know, too, that, though thou didst turn traitor, and reveal to Julia that which has poisoned her mind against my order, I will be revenged there. Poor fool! she thinks that, because she is in her father's house, she is beyond my power. But, by the Holy Virgin, and by all the Saints in Heaven, I swear to move the skies above, and earth and hell beneath, to work her ruin. She shall not escape me. Julia shall yet be the vile, polluted, worthless thing thou art and has been."

Thus insulting the lifeless clay, and venting her rage upon its unheeding ears, the Mother Superior stood for some minutes, until the approaching shades of evening reminded her that she had but little time left for the accomplishment of the purpose which had brought her to that death chamber; which was, to gather together whatever papers she might perchance find in the trunk of the deceased, that could possibly be made to subserve the interests of the order, in procuring possession of the coveted inheritance. Finding nothing, however, she closed the door, carefully locking it, and, leaving the dead neglected as the living had been, descended to her room.

Let not the reader imagine, for a moment, that the character of the Mother Superior has been too darkly drawn. It is the character of one who, under the influence of a dark and gloomy form of superstition, and under the training of a master mind, was fully prepared for the indulgence of every evil motion, the perpetration of every crime; while the black heart within was covered over with a self-control which was imperturbable, when circumstances required its exercise; and an hypocrisy, refined, elegant, and exquisite. In short, the Mother Superior was a Jesuit, and a fair type of her order. None but a Jesuit could have gone from that death scene, and from the agitating deliberations of the oratory, into the presence of a man whose anger she had just reasons to dread, and yet preserve a cool self-possession, and a control over her temper, which would indicate a life free from all disquiet and given up to religious devotion, but most strikingly in contrast with the emotions which were at that moment agitating her bosom. None but a Jesuit could have risen from prayer, and, in a few minutes after, stand by the dead body of one who had fallen a victim to her jealousy and wrath, and deliberately mock and curse that helpless mass of inanimate clay. She was a Jesuit; and, when this is said, we cease to wonder at what would otherwise be inexplicable.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Father General obeys the summons in haste—Meeting between him and the Mother Superior—A vile plot conducted between them—The Mother Superior in a new character—The Father General turned gravedigger—Revolting manner of burying the dead.

THE messenger who had been despatched with the note to the city, with orders to ride day and night, had complied strictly with his instructions, and arrived at the residence of the Father General, by daylight the next morning; and the missive which he bore was handed to the latter, before he had yet risen from his bed. Having read its urgent contents, he immediately ordered a horse for himself, and a fresh one for the messenger, and, as soon as he had eaten an early breakfast, started for the convent; where by dint of riding very constantly, and as fast as his animal, which was a very fleet one, could safely be pushed, he arrived at five o'clock on the afternoon of the day after the nun's death.

The mother Superior met him at the front door, as he dismounted from his jaded horse, and conducted him at once into the oratory, where, with as little delay as possible, she made him acquainted with the present position of things, both as regarded the decease of the Sister Theresa, and the escape of Julia, and asked his advice.

The Father General saw, at once, the difficulties which were involved in the affair; but, with the readiness of invention for which the Jesuit is so remarkable, and for which he in particular was so distinguished, proposed that the dead body should be buried, that night, quietly, without the knowledge of any member of the family; and, in order to this, the Mother Superior and himself must perform the duty. This being accomplished, it would be their next business to substitute some one for the deceased, who might bear some resemblance to her; to procure witnesses from without the establishment, to sware that she was the true Emilie de Vere. This could be more easily done, as the proof would have to be made in Louisiana, and not in New York. The members of the convent knew nothing of the death of Sister Theresa, and could be kept in entire ignorance of it, by raising a report, in the establishment, that she had fled, which would account for her absence; though, indeed, such was the neglect with which the poor nun had been treated in the last few weeks of her illness, especially as it was generally known by those who had previously attended to her at all, that Julia had undertaken to be her nurse, that not a single member of the household knew any thing about her real condition, during that time. As for Julia, she would in all probability never hear of the matter of the inheritance; and, if necessary, she could be watched. Should she or any of her friends make any attempt to interfere in the affair, she must be kept out of the way, and silenced, at all hazards, and by whatever means.

This outline of a plan of operations was freely discussed by the two counsellors, and at length adopted, as the very best under the circumstances. The Mother Superior then ordered some supper for the Father General to be placed in the private parlour; and, leaving him to finish this, she went up alone to the death chamber, to prepare the body for burial; while he would repair to the garden, to see what could be done there towards preparing a grave.

Taking with her a needle and some thread, she entered the room where the body lay, and was surprised to find it much in the same state in which she had left it on the previous afternoon, and that there was a very slight indication of decay perceptible. The same smile sat upon the countenance, and produced the same state of angry feeling in her mind, but she was in no mood to tarry in that remote and lonely part of the convent, without any other company than that of the deceased nun, she hurriedly and rudely sewed up the body in the sheet upon which it was; and, leaving it thus without any other preparation, returned to the room in which she had left the Father General.

The latter had in the meanwhile, selected for the grave a sunken spot in the extreme distant corner of the garden, which was depressed some two feet in the earth, and which, indeed, had much the appearance of an old grave. This spot he had noticed before, in walking through the garden; and it had instantly occurred to him that it would serve the purpose, with very little preparation. There was an abundance of quick lime always kept about the establishment; and, by digging the grave a foot deeper, putting on the body plenty of this lime, and filling up the opening to within a few inches of the surface, covering the whole with rubbish, it would never be discovered; especially as it was situated where nothing was cultivated, that season. Had there not been sufficient reasons why no member of the family should have any knowledge of what was transpiring, lest it should come to the ears of some of the many boarding pupils then in the establishment, the body might have been disposed of in a deep vault under a wing of the building, which was constructed there for the purpose of receiving such remains as they did not wish to bury, or to attach much notice to; where these were speedily destroyed by means of quick lime. But, as this was only accessible by going through a portion of the establishment where they could hardly hope to avoid notice, the spot in the garden was preferred.

Sometime after the convent clock told the hour of ten, an hour at which by the rules of the house, every inmate of the family must be in bed, the Father General proceeded to the garden, and, furnishing himself with the necessary tools, from a small building in which they were kept, had succeeded, in the course of a couple of hours, in making ready the receptacle for the last repose of the very nun, who, three years before, had met him in that same garden, at the dead hour of midnight, and whom he had so basely ruined afterwards. One might suppose that the whole scene would have come up in his mind, and that the image of that then lovely being would have haunted his memory and harrowed his his soul, while he was thus engaged in preparing a spot to hide her body; and so it did, but the Jesuit shook off all sense of uneasiness, and set about the work with all his physical strength, while he kept his thoughts busied with planning for the future. In spite of himself, however, when, as the clock sounded midnight, and, returning to the house for the corpse, he passed the plum tree beneath which he had stood, three years before, with his arm around the unfortunate Sister Theresa, he started involuntarily, and with a shudder, as, by the light of the moon, he thought he saw her advancing to meet him; and it was no small relief to his feelings, when he discovered that it was the Mother Superior, who was coming to see what progress he had made.

Fully realizing the extreme delicacy of his position, under the peculiar circumstances which surrounded both of them on this occasion, and in the existence of recollections which came up fresh to the memories of both, while neither dared to make any allusion to them, the Father General gracefully offered his arm to the Mother Superior, and, playfully complimenting her upon her good looks, led her to the house.

Here, quietly ascending to the room in which the dead nun lay, the Superior locked the door, and bade the General enter; narrowly observing his countenance as he approached the bed-side, while she held a candle in her hand, and, as she perceived a slight shudder to pass through his frame as he took the body in his arms, and threw it upon his shoulder, a scornful smile might have been seen upon her proud features; but which she took good care should not be witnessed by him.

They thus passed down again to the garden; the Mother Superior bearing in her hand a bucket of lime, which she had previously placed near the door steps; and, in the course of half an hour, the remains of Sister Theresa, unshrouded and uncoffined, were resting in the narrow bed prepared for her, and the spot marked only by the up-piled briars and rubbish; while the Father General and the Mother Superior were seated in the oratory of the latter, plotting how they might secure to the order the large estate of her father, left to her on the condition of renouncing the Catholic faith, and throwing aside her nun's dress; a condition with which she would most gladly have complied, had she been alive, and had it been in her power; though poverty for her life long, and not unbounded wealth, had been the result. She had, however, exchanged her religious habit, it is to be hoped, for one of glorious sheen, and her prison-house on earth for a noble mansion in the skies. The quiet smile of hope which played upon the cold features of the clay which her freed spirit had left behind, gave token that, though unfriended here, she had found friends there, " where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are for ever at rest."

An Omniscient eye, however, had beheld this deed of darkness; and, though the perpetrators might baffle and deceive their short-sighted fellow-creatures, yet they could not escape the detection of Him who seeth all things.

The next morning, just at daybreak, the Father General was seen to enter his own room on the first floor, by the Sister Porter, as she descended to ring the bell for matins. She knew not where he had spent the night, but had her own surmises, which, however, prudent woman that she was, she kept to herself.

CHAPTER XIX.

Duplicity—The plot thickens—Reward offered for the missing nun—A substitute found—A third party in the plot—Threatened tumult.

When about to sit down to the breakfast-table, the next morning, the Mother Superior, turning to Sister Martina, in the most natural manner imaginable, as if it were an every day occurrence, told her to go to Sister Theresa's room, and see if she wanted anything; remarking, as she did so, to the Father General, that this Sister had been sick, for some length of time, and that she was afraid she would continue to be so, for some weeks longer, though she did not apprehend a serious result in the case.

The morning meal was nearly finished, when Sister Martina glided into the room, and, in what was designed to appear as a whisper, but at the same time to be overheard by the Father General, she told the Mother Superior that Sister Theresa was not in her room, and that it seemed to be in confusion, as if she had left it hastily.

"Not in her room?" repeated the Superior, with well-affected surprise.

"No, madam," answered the nun.

"She must be in some of the other rooms, in the same part of the house, then," returned the Superior; "go, my good Martina, and see if she is not."

"I have looked into them all," was the response; "but I cannot find her anywhere."

"'Tis very strange," remarked the Superior—"I do not know what to make of it. Go, Sister Martina, into every room in the house, and see if you can find her, and let me know immediately, for I feel uneasy about her." Then, turning to the nuns and boarders, as they sat in long lines at the two tables, she asked if any of them had seen Sister Theresa that morning; and, as might be expected, was answered in the negative.

On report being made to the Mother Superior that the missing nun could not be found anywhere about the house, orders were given that the well, the cistern, and all of the places into which it was possible that she might have fallen, if in her weakness of body she had attempted to pass about the yard, should be strictly searched; but in vain, she was still unfound.

The Superior's countenance betrayed a great deal of well-feigned anxiety; the Father General seemed to be greatly disturbed; the whole house was in an uproar—nuns running here and running there—others standing about in groups, in earnest conversation—all completely mystified, and lost in wonder at so strange an occurrence, while none seemed to be more so than the two individuals present, who knew all about the affair.

At length, when all further search appeared to be useless, the Mother Superior, speaking so as to be heard by most of those present, requested the Father General to accompany her to her private parlour, in order, as she said, that she might consult him further in reference to this truly mysterious disappearance of one of their number, and as to the steps which it might be necessary to take in the premises. Having spent a half hour thus, as the family supposed, they again appeared in the parlour, in the midst of the assembled nuns and boarders; and the Father General announced it as his deliberate opinion that the missing nun had escaped from the convent, during the previous night, by the aid of some person or persons unknown; and, calling for his horse, intimated his intention of making diligent search for her, that she might be apprehended and brought back; at the same time, requiring the Superior to degrade the Sister Porter from her office, for want of due vigilance in the discharge of her duties, unless it could be made to appear that she was not to blame. So saying, and giving his blessing to all present, the Father General mounted his horse, which had meanwhile been brought to the door, and returned to the city.

In the papers of the following day, an advertisement appeared, couched in such language as this:

"FIFTY DOLLARS REWARD.

"Left the Convent of the Annunciation, on the night of the 13th instant, in a state of mental derangement, produced by fever, a nun, who is doubtless not far from the establishment, but who has not yet been found, although diligent search has been made for her. The humane will greatly relieve the distressed feelings of her sister nuns, by giving any information that they may have in the premises, and receive the above reward for the restoration to

"FRANCOIS JUBERT,
"No. 87, Chamber Street, New York."

"*July* 14*th*, 1812."

Anxious to give this pretended escape of the sick nun as much publicity as possible, without appearing to do so, the General, during the day, sent some of his confident emissaries into different parts of the city, to talk about the affair in various crowded resorts, as an item of news, until, by noon, it was noised abroad everywhere, and produced quite an excited state of feeling. Various parties of zealous Catholics visited the convent, and conversed with the Mother Superior, during the week following; and others scoured the surrounding country, in search of the fugitive, but without success. The excitement at length died away, and the affair was well nigh forgotten.

Meanwhile, the Father General had, by means of his own indefatigable industry, for he dared not entrust the matter to the agency of any third person, succeeded in finding a nun of about the same age, height, colour of hair, complexion, and general contour of person and features, with the deceased nun; and, in bringing her, unseen and closely veiled, travelling in a close carriage, and principally by night, from the convent in Canada, where he had discovered her, to the dwelling of Mr. Wilmot, in New York city, where he stealthily left her, about one month after the pretended disappearance of the missing nun.

This Mr. Wilmot was a member of the Episcopal Church, nominally, but really a lay Jesuit in disguise—and with him the Father General had arranged the whole matter, with the connivance of the wife of this supposed Episcopalian; a handsome douceur being the reward of their iniquity. It may be proper, also, to say that Mr. Wilmot was a small grocer, at the corner of two streets, somewhat remote from the centre of the city. It was nearly midnight when the nun entered the house, disguised in an ample travelling dress, which completely concealed her religious habit.

Next morning, Mr. Wilmot took care to mention, in confidence, to some of his customers, that during the previous night, and just as his family was retiring to rest, between ten and eleven o'clock, a beautiful nun, who bore traces of recent illness, had knocked at his front door, and, appearing greatly terrified when he went to see who it was, rushed into the passage, and, falling upon her knees, implored him to take pity upon her, as a poor nun who had fled from most dreadful persecutions in a convent, some distance off, and to afford her protection, until she could write to her father to come and take her home. He then gave quite an interesting account of the reception which he and his wife had given to the poor creature, and told his friends that he had no doubt, from her story, that she was the nun concerning whom a reward of fifty dollars had been offered, about a month ago, in the city newspapers; but that he should scorn to betray the innocent sufferer into the hands of those wretched priests, and would protect her, as long as she choose to stay in his house.

As might naturally be supposed, and as was intended by the crafty grocer, who had his cue from the Father General, these friends of his, to whom this secret was confided, thought it too good to keep, and so relieved their burdened minds by sharing their confidence with some of their neighbours. These, in their turn, thinking that a division of responsibility was "within the line of safe precedents," imparted the secret to their friends, until, by ten o'clock that morning, a large crowd had gathered about the grocer's door, clamorous to see the escaped nun. Closing his shop door, however, and sending off post haste for a body of police to protect his dwelling, and for some two or three clergymen of different denominations, as well as a lawyer of some eminence with whom he wished to consult as to what course he should pursue, he, in the meantime, appeared at an upper window, and told the assembled crowd, which was every moment increasing, that it was true that he had given protection to a friendless nun, who had claimed it at his hands, and that he was determined to guard her with his life, until she should go forth from his house, of her own accord, or he had had time to take counsel with those for whom he had sent, and who were more experienced in such matters than himself.

This declaration was heard with cheers by the Protestants, and hisses and groans by the Catholics, instigated, but held in check, by the emissaries of the Father General, who, from a neighbouring house, in which he had concealed himself—the house of a member of that church—directed the movements of his party.

"But the nun is crazy," shouted some of the Catholics, "and does not know what she is doing."

"She is not crazy,"—replied the grocer;—"she is no more crazy than you are. She is an exceedingly sensible woman, and knows very well what she is about."

"I demand that you give her up to me," said a very genteelly dressed man, who now made his appearance in front of the mob. "I make this demand in the name of the Spiritual Father who has the charge of her."

"I shall do no such thing," said the grocer.

"You must, or we will take her by force," replied the spokesman, who looked around him, to see how many he could depend upon, in the crowd, to aid him in the assault.

"I command you to keep the peace," said a magistrate, followed by a bevy of police, who advanced, and laid his hand upon the shoulder of the belligerent.

"I shall permit no violence here, my friends,"—he added—"the proper authorities must decide this matter; and I know you are too good citizens to wrest it out of their hands."

"That is the right way. That is right!" cried out a score of voices—"let the law decide it."

Meanwhile, the persons sent for had arrived; and it was determined that the nun should present herself, under a strong escort of police, before the city authorities, and claim their protection, as being stronger and more efficient than that of any private individual.

In a few minutes, a carriage was brought to the grocer's door, in which the nun, together with Dr. Chine, an Episcopal minister, the Rev. Mr. Scott, a Presbyterian clergyman, and the Rev. Mr. Fletcher, of the Methodist church, were seated; while the magistrate and his civil force surrounded the carriage, and effectually guarded them from the show of resistance and attack, which was made by the Catholic portion of the crowd, but which was too well trained, however, to strike without a signal from their leaders, who were thickly interspersed among them, and held them in perfect control, although there were not a few hot-headed Irishmen in the midst.

CHAPTER XX.

The pretended nun undergoes a judical examination—Jesuitical manœuvring—An apt pupil—The inquiry terminates in favour of the supposed nun.

Arrived at the mayor's office, the nun, who gave her name as Emilie de Vere, otherwise called by the appellation, as a religieuse, of Sister Theresa, stated that, in consequence of persecution and neglect in the Convent of Annunciation, she had fled from that establishment, about a month ago; had reached the city on the last evening, and now claimed the protection of the city authorities, until she could write to her father, who resided in the south, and from whom she had not heard for many years, to come and take her home; declaring, in the most solemn manner, with hands uplifted to heaven, and tears in her eyes, which drew tears in turn from almost every eye in the house, his honour the mayor not excepted—that she then and for ever abjured Roman Catholicism, and all allegiance to pope or priest—beseeching those before whom she then stood, not to suffer her to fall into the hands of her enemies again, as, in that event, her life would most inevitably be the forfeit. She acted her part to perfection, and completely imposed upon all present.

Francois Jubert, the Father General, then stepped forward, and declared that he had the spiritual charge of the nuns belonging to the Convent of the Anunciation—that the nun was correct in stating that she had fled from the establishment, about a month since, and that she was the same for whose recovery he had offered a reward of fifty dollars, on the 14th of July last, but that it was not true that she had been persecuted or neglected—on the contrary, he affirmed that she had been most kindly cared for by the Mother Superior, and by all the members of the family; adding, that the nun had become crazy by means of a severe spell of sickness, the traces of which her pale countenance still bore, and that this state of mental aberration had led her to take the step which she had. He concluded by expressing the hope that his honour, the mayor, would not suffer the Catholic Church to be scandalized by the wild ravings of an insane nun; but that he would order her surrender to him, that he might take her back to her kind friends, the Mother Superior and the sisters of charity, whose hearts were now filled with disquietude at her absence, and with apprehensions for her safety. While thus addressing himself to the mayor, he cast looks of paternal regard and pity upon the nun, and even shed a tear, as if in commiseration of her unfortunate condition.

The ministers present, however, in their turn, expressed their confidence in the sanity of the nun, and declared that they could not believe, without further evidence than they had, that the declaration of insanity, made by the priest, was anything more than a ruse to get the poor girl back into his possession.

The mayor then sent for two of the ablest physicians in the city, and requested them to examine the nun fully, and to satisfy themselves as to the condition of her mind. This request they complied with; and, having conversed with her there in the open court, for more than an hour, assisted at times by questions from the clergymen—they declared, upon oath, that, so far from her being crazy, she was in the full possession of vigorous faculties of mind, of extraordinary power, and was, upon the whole, one of the most intellectual woman they ever conversed with in their lives.

The Father General here interfered, and, stated that hers was a case monomania, and that, while she could converse intelligently enough upon every other subject—if they would introduce a topic which he would name to them privately, they would find that, in a few moments, she would become perfectly wild upon it.

Having whispered this topic in their ears, in reference to which he had declared her to be a monomaniac, the physicians proceeded to converse with her upon it, for some time; and, although it was one of her exceeding delicacy, and she was talking with those who were entire strangers to her, yet such was the modesty of her replies, and so rational were they, that her interrogators indignantly affirmed that it was an outrageous trifling with the time of the court, and more especially, with the feelings of the interesting lady; for she was perfectly free from all traces of insanity as any individual of them all there present.

His honour the mayor then asked the nun if she had any place in the city in view, where she would wish to stay, until her father could be written to; and receiving, for answer, that she would prefer remaining in the family whose protection she had first claimed, if it was thought safe for her to be there; and Mr. Wilmot stating that he would give bond and security, in any sum required by the mayor, for the safe keeping and rendition of the nun whenever called upon to do so, it was ordered that she be returned to his house, and there suffered to remain unmolested.

The Father General bit his lip, as if in angry disappointment, and left the room; while Mr. Wilmot took charge of the nun, and, under the escort of a police officer, re-entering the carriage which had borne them to the mayor's office, was driven to his residence.

Here the nun soon exchanged her religious habit for a secular dress; and, as she dwelt a quiet inmate in his family, never going out into the street, except at night, and to visit the dwelling of the Father General, no further excitement occurred in the public mind. The Catholics, who, under other circumstances, would have raised an ungovernable storm about the poor nun's ears, being controlled and kept quiet by their superiors.

CHAPTER XXI.

The Father General's residence—The library—Splendid furniture and fittings of the establishment—The Father General's letter to the Mother Superior—Plot upon plot.

THE residence of the Father General, in New York, was a handsome three-story brick building, of the first class of private houses, having a basement with dining room and kitchen attached; a suite of drawing rooms, richly furnished, on the first floor proper; two large chambers on the second, and as many in the third, with a neat little room, over the hall, on both; and a fine attic, well finished, for the servants of the establishment. In the rear was a small yard, which his taste had caused to be handsomely arranged in little flower-beds, in which were some most rare and beautiful plants, carefully attended to by the gardener from the city convent, who came at regular intervals to spend a day or two in working the beds, and seeing that everything was in nice order. Between this residence and the adjoining house, was an alley of some three feet and a half in width, with a front gate opening upon the street; the alley running back into the garden. The front chamber of this dwelling, in the second story, was occupied by the Father General; the rear one appropriated to his guests, and the small room over the door, as a cabinet where he kept his most valuable papers in an iron safe, did all of his writing, and transacted his private business. The only opening to this room was through his chamber; as he had the door formerly leading from it into the passage, built up, so as to render himself the more secure from eaves-dropping.

The front room in the third story was fitted up as a library; having shelves arranged on all sides, upon which was found a magnificent collection of books, in all languages, and upon almost all subjects; many of them very rare and of great value. A map-rack stood on one side of the room, provided with maps and atlases, some of which were especially prepared with a view to exhibit, at a glance, the points on the face of the earth, where the Jesuits had established themselves. A very large terrestrial globe, also, stood near these maps. An oval table, covered with green cloth, and of large dimensions, occupied the centre of this room, upon which were bundles of letters and papers tied up with red tape, and neatly labelled by the secretary of the Father General, a young Italian by the name of Pietro Lodetti, who spent most of his time in the library, during the day, and occupied the adjoining bed-room, at night. It may be as well to state, here, that this secretary had been sent out from Italy, by the head of the order there, of his own accord, to the Father General in the United States, with the real, though not avowed, intention of acting as a spy upon the actions of the latter; such being the suspicious jealousy of these Jesuits, in reference to each other.

It was altogether a rare establishment in its entire fitting up; and, save that it had throughout that masculine tone which seems to be inseparably connected with all bachelor residences, from which the mellowing hand of woman and her delicate taste have been excluded, it might have been a model for the whole city, in point of neatness and elegance. In the drawing rooms were hung some of the best specimens of the old masters; in the chambers were found all possible luxurious contrivances for ease and comfort; in the cuisine, every arrangement necessary for the perfection of good living; and in the cellar, carefully placed under lock and key, a choice store of the richest old wines, duly labelled with the dates of the respective vintages, upon his profound acquaintance with which, the Father General greatly prided himself. It is true that all this contrasted strangely enough with the Jesuit's vow of poverty; but, if you had asked him to explain the glaring inconsistency, he would, doubtless, have replied to you, with great readiness, that, as the head of the order in the United States, he had dispensation to live thus; the importance and dignity of the office which he filled, requiring that he should live in corresponding state.

On the evening of the day upon which the nun representing Emilie de Vere or the Sister Theresa, had been taken before the city authorities, the Father General was seated at the round table covered with green cloth, which stood in his cabinet, busily engaged in writing a letter, in cypher, to the Mother Superior; a quiet smile, meanwhile, playing upon his features.

After giving her a detailed account of the events of the day, he thus proceeded:

"Thus, you will perceive, our plot works admirably. The Canada nun, about whom I have already written to you, has played her part to profection; and I have succeeded, by her help, and by the manner in which I have managed this whole affair, in making the mayor and the good citizens of New York believe the nun to be the veritable one whom I advertised, last July, and that we Catholics are the most barbarous people on the face of the earth. But, while they are under this impression, we are steadily advancing towards the desired object, and can afford to be covered with the dust which is thrown up by our carriage wheels, whose revolutions bear us to the acquisition of a vast inheritance. It is of the utmost importance to us, that every possible suspicion of connivance in this matter should be avoided; and the worse, therefore, the attitude in which we appear to stand to the pretended Sister Theresa, the more improbable it is that collusion should be suspected or detected.

"I have written to Father Marin, to make every possible effort to introduce into the family of Mr. Moreton, a servant under the control of our order, that we may have a spy upon Julia, and be able to countervail any mischief that she or her friends may attempt to do so.

"On to-morrow, the nun will write a letter as from Emilie de Vere to her father, requesting him to come and take her home, which I shall take care to send to the executor of the estate, in such a way as will avoid all suspicion, and put the affair a step further forward in the process of completion. Meanwhile, she is safely housed with Mr. Wilmot, whom all the world believes to be a good Episcopalian, while he is one of us, and as true as steel. Ha! ha!

"I will keep you advised of further proceedings."

To this letter he added the following postscript, in the same cypher:

"If you have any clothing of Emilie de Vere, worn by her previous to her assuming the religious habit, or any articles which her friends, if there be any, would be likely to recognise as hers—box them up carefully, and send them to my address."

Despatching this letter to the post office, by a servant who answered the signal bell wire which comunicated with the kitchen, the Father General applied himself to the examination of a large mass of documents which he took from the iron safe, and to the perusal and answering of several letters which lay upon the table before him some in cypher, and some in a plain hand; and, as the great town clock, on the City Hall, told the hour of two in the morning, jaded and worn out with fatigue, he entered his bedroom, and, mumbling a sleepy and hasty prayer, threw himself upon his luxurious couch of down, and slept soundly until the rap of the servant at the door, which was carefully and doubly locked, aroused him to a late breakfast.

CHAPTER XXII.

The Father General's anxiety—His interview and transaction with the false Emilie de Vere—The fabricated letter—The Italian secretary—Plot and counter-plot—Pietro and Alice—The intimacy commenced.

The next evening, about nine o'clock, the Father General might have been seen seated at his cabinet, at the little green table, on which were placed writing materials, anxiously awaiting the arrival of some one; for he frequently arose, and, going to the window, looked out into the darkness, and as often returned to his chair, with an evidently increasing uneasiness of manner.

At length, he was about to seize his hat, and leave the room, when he heard the sound of approaching footsteps; the gate opening into the alley creaked upon its hinges, and he hastened down stairs to meet the expected visitor, who turned out to be the pretended Sister Theresa, dressed not in the garb of a *religieuse*, but that of a woman in the middle walk of life, plain but neat. She was accompanied by the secretary, in a secular dress, who, with his quiet, down look, glided silently by her side, and, crossing his arms upon his breast, with a low inclination of the head, as he met the Father Jesuit, passed on to his own apartment; leaving the nun whom he had been sent for, standing in the hall with the latter.

"I will call for you in two hours," said the General to the secretary, as the former turned to ascend the stairway along with the nun.

"Yes, sir," was the reply of the secretary, again crossing his arms, and bowing his head.

When the General had introduced the nun into his cabinet, carefully locking the door of the bed-room, he looked sternly at her, while he said, in an impressive tone:

"You are an hour behind your time. Why is this?"

"My lord," replied the nun, somewhat alarmed by his earnest manner, "I was detained by some company that came to Mr. Wilmot's, after tea, and whom I could not leave without appearing to be abrupt, and excite suspicion."

"It is well. You have acted your part nobly so far; continue to be true and faithful, and you will deserve well of the order. Betray my trust, and—you know what will be the consequence," said the Father General, while a slight tremor passed over the poor girl's frame.

"Now," continued the Jesuit, "sit down at that table, and write as I shall dictate to you."

"*New York City, August* 18, 1812.

"To Mr. Charles de Vere,
Bâton Rouge, Louisiana.

"My dear, dear father, can you, will you, forgive me, for the base part I have acted, in bringing so much sorrow upon you and upon my dear mother, of whose death, some years ago, I have heard? Oh, if she were but alive, how would it rejoice my heart to fall upon my knees before her, and implore her forgiveness, too! but she is gone; and you are my only remaining parent. Will you forgive me, dear father, when I tell you that I have repented in dust and ashes—that I have fled from the hated convent, and renounced Roman Catholicism for ever? O, come to me, beloved father! and tell me that you do forgive me; and take me away from this region, where I fear, every day, that the dreadful priests will find me out, and use violence to my life. You will find me at the house of a Mr. William Wilmot, a grocer, at the corner of Hudson and King-street. Mr. Wilmot is a Protestant, who has kindly taken me into his family, and so far protected me against the efforts of the vile Jesuits. But hasten to me, dear father—every day will seem an age until I see you.

"Your repentant child,
"EMILIE DE VERE."

"There, that's a good girl," said the General, patting the nun on the head. "Let me see what you have written."

"Ah! that is just right," he added, after having carefully perused the letter—"just what we want. Ma foi, but you write a pretty hand, just like those pretty fingers with which you wrote it," continued he, as he looked archly at the pretty woman, while a blush mantled her cheeks."

"Come now, my dear, direct this on the back," said the Jesuit, as he handed her the letter, which he had meanwhile folded and enclosed in an envelope—"and write the address in a little larger hand than you have used within, in order that it may be sure not to miscarry. Yes, that will do; thank you, my pet."

Leaving the pretty nun with the Father Jesuit, while he instructs her fully in that part which she is to act in the plot, let us go up stairs, and look in upon the secretary. See, there he sits, in that room filled with books, surrounded by a pile of papers, which he seems to have been engaged in arranging and filing. But he no longer has that quiet, down look; his feet are placed upon the edge of the table: as he leans back in his chair, he twirls his pen between his fingers, and his piercing black eye is dancing in its socket, as, with a look full of intelligence, he seems to be solving some mental question which deeply interests him. Presently, as if unable to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion, he threw the pen upon the table, with a gesture of impatience, exclaiming—

"I will find it out, in spite of him. It is no mere love intrigue, I am sure. If so, why should this nun have come all the way from Canada, as she told me, to-night, she had; and why all this pretence about her escape from the Convent of the Annunciation, and about her being a sister somebody instead of herself? why this personation of another nun, and all this uproar at the mayor's office? Why is she staying at Wilmot's? There is some grand plot on hand; and I will have a hand in it—I vow to the Holy Virgin, I will."

"But how shall I go about it? Ah! I see. I will make love to this nun—and then, Mr. Father General—my Lord, the representative of the Great Head of the Jesuits in these United States—then see if I do not get from her all she knows about this matter: and she must necessarily know a good deal. Aha! Pietro, you have got him now."

So saying, the young priest seemed to be greatly elated; but, just in the height of it, and while he was still planning and plotting, in his own mind, how he should carry out his newly-formed scheme, a signal, which apprised him that the Father General required his presence to attend the nun to her home, interrupted his reverie, and called him down stairs. Here he found the latter awaiting him, with averted countenance, outside the chamber door of the General; and the two, descending to the yard, soon found their way to the street, and rapidly walked towards the part of the city in which Mr. Wilmot lived.

During the fifteen minutes which elapsed before reaching the residence of the nun, the secretary had made such good use of his time, that she had promised to take a walk with him, for the benefit of her health, on the following night; it being agreed upon, between them, that, at dark, she should retire to her room, on pretence of a headache, while he would walk slowly before the house, on the opposite side of the way; and, when she discovered him, she was to steal quietly out into the street, and join him.

The truth is, that the nun found it a very tiresome affair to be cooped up in a small house, day after day, with nothing to do; while the busy scenes in the street upon which she looked, day after day, excited her woman's curiosity to know more of what was going on in the world around her; and, as she did not dare to go out alone, by day or by night, she looked upon the offer of the handsome young Italian as affording her just what she wanted, an opportunity for rambling about unobserved, and of taking a peep at men and things as they existed outside of the walls of a convent.

They did ramble about, for two good hours, that night of their appointment; and, while the secretary continued to amuse her childish curiosity, by means of many strange sights and sounds which attracted her observation and fell upon her ear, he managed most adroitly, and all unconsciously to her, to draw from her, indirectly, a number of items which gave him, unitedly, some clue to the grand plot whose existence he suspected, and of whose nature he felt anxious to have some knowledge.

These nocturnal ramblings were kept up for a considerable length of time; but, as they did not occur oftener than once, or at most, twice a week, and great care was taken that they should not be extended to such an hour in the night as would be likely to place the nun in the position of being locked out after the family had retired to rest, they were not discovered; while they led to consequences which will have an important bearing upon future events in the progress of this story.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Alice's parents—Placed in a convent at an early age—New feelings produced by new scenes—Evening rambles—Mutual attachment—The dawning of light—Its effect upon Pietro and Alice—Their conversation and resolution.

The nun, whom the Father General had found in a convent in Canada, and brought to New York, to personate the deceased Sister Theresa, was the daughter of Colonel Soule, a French officer of distinction, who had been killed in a duel, near Montreal; and whose widow had placed the young Alice, then only five years old, in the care of the Abbess, while she returned to France, to see after her husband's property. The French Revolution had, in the meantime, broken out, and Madame Soule died, a prey to anxiety and grief. The orphaned Alice had, therefore, grown up in the convent, without having ever been outside of its walls from the day upon which she entered them, until that when, in company with the Father General, she had started for the city:—she having previously passed her novitiate, and been a nun for some two years.

It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that, when this young creature, inheriting all the vivacity of the French character, and trained amid the gloom and monotony of conventual scenes, was placed, wholly inexperienced, in the midst of a large and crowded city, like New York, full of novel sights, which excited her curiosity and called into active exercise her ardent imagination, with what she saw and heard around her contrasted so strangely with the austere aspect of things as they existed in the prison-house in which she had been reared, she should be fascinated with the new world into which she had been so suddenly ushered, and should look forward, with dread, to the period of her return to that living tomb. Especially is not this to be wondered at, when it is remembered that her *Cicerone* was a young and handsome Italian, of noble family; whose accomplished manners and whose brilliant talents had, at first, been employed to win from her all she knew in reference to the plot of the General; but which had accomplished results, to both, but little dreamed of by either; for he had awakened feelings in her mind, to which she had hitherto been a stranger; while, in his turn, he felt that the flame which he had kindled in her bosom, burned also in his own.

Indeed, the circumstances of these two young persons were somewhat similar; for he had been placed, for family reasons, at a very tender age, in a monastery at Rome; and had been educated wholly within its walls, in all the artifice and trickery of the Jesuits, until, discovering peculiar talent for intrigue, he had, at the age of twenty three years, been selected by the head of the order there, and sent to this country, in company with the Legate on his visit of installation, as private secretary to the Father General; for the double purpose of acting as a spy upon the movements of the latter, and of obliging the rich and powerful family of the Lodetti, who had their own reasons for desiring that Pietro should be removed as far from them as possible. Since his arrival in the United States, he had, as a quick observer and an intelligent reasoner, acquired new views of men and things. Life presented itself, to his mind, in an entirely novel aspect; and he began secretly to form conclusions, even to project plans, which startled himself, accustomed has he had been previously to a blind submission to the will of his Superiors, and to have his thoughts take their complexion from the colouring of those who had assumed to think for him. Yet the very novelty and daring of these new conceptions had a peculiar charm for his excitable and naturally enterprising disposition, and were, therefore, readily indulged by him.

If, then, Alice felt like a bird let loose, for the first time from a cage in which it had been raised, and disposed to soar alóft into the blue ether, upon those pinions which hitherto had beaten in vain against its prison bars; his feelings resembled those of one who, shut up from infancy in the dark cavern, by and by emerges upon green fields, lit up by the gladsome sunshine; and, after standing for a time, gazing in mute amazement upon the freshly developed beauties of nature, at length longs to roam over those fields, and become better acquainted with those beauties.

Their rambles through the city, by night, had served to attach these two beings to each other, in strong and mystic ties:—the stronger because they had became mutually acquainted with each other's history; and their souls so mingled in sympathy and affection, that their confidence was perfect—no thought which sprang up in the mind of the one, being held back from the other.

During one of these excursions, they happened to pass near a Prot estant church, in which the regular night service was conducted. Prompted by curiosity, they entered, and took their seats in the first pew they came to. Here, unobserved themselves, because seated in the rear of the entire congregation, they looked with deep interest, for the first time in their lives, upon the simple form of religious service—so plain, so fervant, so rational;—and could not help contrasting it with the complex and pompous ceremonial of their own church; and, when the minister arose, and in earnest tones gave out his text—" Ye shall know the truth; and the truth shall make you free;"—they listened with rapt attention to his delineation of true spiritual freedom, the means by which it is attained, and the result of this freedom, to the individual, the nation, the world at large. As they listened, new views of human rights, of human happiness, of divine truth, all consonant as they were with right reason, sprang up in their minds, and placed themselves in striking opposition to the dogmas in which they had been instructed, and the slavery, mental, moral, and physical, in which they had been hitherto held. They felt as did the monk of Eisleben, when he found the long neglected Latin copy of the Holy Scriptures, in the library of his convent; and, while reading it, "his soul kindled with new energy, as he saw how truth had been wronged by ignorant piety and hypocritical infidelity." And as contact with the opinions of freemen, who regarded liberty as their birthright, had induced opinions and feelings in the minds of those who, under the leading of La Fayette and his gallant associates, had crossed the broad Atlantic to aid the colonies in America in achieving their liberties,—which had led to the attempt—unsuccessful though it was—to accomplish the same result in France, on their return home,—so, in reference to the young secretary and Alice, they felt that their birthright had been withheld from them and, that God and man would justify the effort to secure its restoration.

The service concluded, the secretary and his companion left the church, and directed their steps towards Mr. Wilmot's;—walking slowly, for their minds were busy with the solution of problems which had been presented to them, for the first time, that night. At length, the former said to Alice, in tones which indicated deep thought, as well as honest conviction:

"Alice, we have been asleep. Immured within conventual walls, we had no knowledge of the existence of any other world than that we found around us. Instructed in the dogmas of the Catholic Church, we have been taught to believe that all besides is heresy,—damnable doctrine, unworthy of our belief, and insulting to Heaven, as well as destructive of the soul. But we have awaked to find that there is a populous world outside of the microcosm in which we have been reared;—a populous world, whose inhabitants enjoy life, and liberty, under the benign influence of a religion which is simple in its forms, but which appears mighty in its effects; a religion embraced by millions, and which is at once dignifying to man, since it frees him from tyranny; and honourable to God, since it represents him not as enslaving the mind and heart of man, but as the great deliverer from thraldom. I feel that I have awaked to a new existence; methinks I breathe a purer atmosphere than I did in Rome. I am a freeman! How is it with thee, dearest Alice?"

"Pietro, I feel strange;"—replied Alice, while her voice trembled with emotion. "I do not know what to think, nor what to say. I am bewildered, 'Ye shall know the truth; and the truth shall make you free.' Pietro, what is truth?"

"Truth, in the abstract, Alice, is accordance with fact and reality. Moral truth must be in conformity with the character and will of Him who is the great Moral Governor of the world:—the great moral principles laid down by Him for man's government, finding their developement in the administration of divine grace and providence, ultimating in the retributions of Eternity, and justified by the results, in the sight of men, of angels, and of devils. You and I, Alice, have been taught to believe that the truth is alone to be found within the pale of Holy Mother Church: but, if so, how is this assertion to be reconciled with the corrupt and tyrannical practices of the church; where is the accordance between the revealed character of Jehovah, and the grand distinctive features of Catholicism, and what, I begin to fear, are its direct and necessary tendencies? Where is the accordant truth—this freedom of which we have heard, to-night for the first time in all our lives? We have hitherto seen neither. On the contrary, we have been taught that the very essence of our religion consisted in submission to the will of our superiors, and in our religious vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience;—which sooth to say, seem to be solemn mockeries in the estimation of those to whom we made them: if, indeed, we are to consider their lives as commentaries upon their principles—we have been led to surrender ourselves, body, soul, and spirit, to their control. I very much fear that the dogmas of our church are incapable of bearing the test of truth; and I long to share that liberty which seems to be the birthright of man, and to be so largely enjoyed by the people in whose midst our lot has been so strangely cast. I fear that I am fast becoming an heretic; but I cannot help it."

"It is strange, Pietro, that I have much the same thoughts and feelings: and it is passing strange, as you say, how we have been thrown into this new world of thought and feeling, of freedom and happiness. You must instruct me, Pietro; I know not how to bring my little bark to shore, from the midst of the billows which arise tumultuously around me."

"I will, Alice, with all my heart,"—replied Pietro. "But,"—continued he, taking her hand in his, and pressing it tenderly, while he spoke in soft, yet distinct tones, which thrilled through her woman's heart, pulsating as it did in every throb for him, and for him alone: "promise me, Alice, that, in good or ill, in weal or woe, whatever may be our future lot, our lives and our fate shall be one and inseparable,—that we shall never be separated."

"Never!"—said Alice, clinging to his arm, and looking up into his face, with a countenance which was suffused with the blush of maiden modesty, but which spoke the deep trust of her soul, and the firmness of her decision.

"Heaven bless thee, dearest Alice, for that word. Now will I protect thee with my life, and lead you, as best I may, to the enjoyment of that liberty for which we both pant. The vows that we made, were made in ignorance; they must be displeasing to God, because evidently repugnant to the truth of things. He will absolve us; and His truth will make us free from the tyranny of man. All will be right, Alice. Trust, and be prudent. Let us bide our time. We shall yet be free!"

He had become so much excited, while uttering the last few words, that his voice was raised to a pitch which would have endangered their safety, had any prying one been nigh; but fortunately none observed the interesting pair, or heard the words of treason against the interests of Rome, save the loved one to whom they were addressed, and the Great Being who had witnessed the plighting of their troth, and who doubtless approved the act, notwithstanding the vows which they had made to the Holy Mother Church, in ignorance and in superstition.

They soon reached Mr. Wilmot's door; and, as they stood a moment, before parting for the night, Pietro said to Alice:

"It seems to me that we both need a guide in our new situation, as regards both our position to the church, and our inquiry after truth; and, as I have no longer any confidence in our old ones, which serve but to bewilder and mislead us, I shall, on tomorrow, procure a copy of the Protestant Bible, and read it for myself. I shall also get a copy for you, Alice, and bring it with me, when next I come. Meanwhile, we will come to visit that Protestant church, every Thursday night, where we heard such things, this evening. Farewell, dearest—be prudent, and look to the Great Source of Light, Life, and Liberty, for help and for guidance. Good night."

So saying, he turned away, while Alice sought her room, and, kneeling down, not in prayer, as usual, to Mary—"the refuge of sinners"—but to *Him*, who is "*the way, and the truth, and the life*," she poured out her soul in devout supplication that He would lead them into an acquaintance with the way of salvation, and guide them in their present difficult circumstances.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Alice's ignorance of the true nature of the plot she was engaged in—Her anxiety on that account—Her determination to act right—Arrival of Mr. Prentiss—Alice's perturbation and alarm in consequence—Her interview with Mr. Prentiss—Alice divulges the particulars to Mr. Prentiss—His astonishment at the recital—His determination to befriend Alice—Escape of Pietro and Alice.

THREE months had now passed since Alice had written the letter to the south, in the name of Emilie de Vere, which had been dictated to her in the name of the Father General. Mr. Wilmot, if he knew anything of her intimacy with the secretary, said nothing about it; and the latter, together with Alice, was almost ready to make a public recantation of Roman Catholicism, and to profess the Protestant faith, when a circumstance occurred, which placed her in an exceedingly embarrassing situation, and had like to have ruined the plot of the Jesuit, ere yet it had matured.

Alice, on being brought to New York, had been told that, for reasons which involved the interests of the order, and which it was not necessary she should then be made acquainted with, she was to personate Emilie de Vere, a young girl, who was about her own age, height, complexion, &c.; whose father was a Mr. Charles de Vere, formerly a resident of New York city, but, for some years, of the parish of Bâton Rouge, in Louisiana, a wealthy planter; and whose mother had been dead for many years. She was further told that the part which she was expected to act, from time to time, would be communicated to her, as it became necessary, and that she was on no account to take any step, or to answer any questions, beyond what was stated to her, without leave and instructions from the Father General. The part which she had acted before the mayor's court, had all been arranged for her beforehand, and the very language, as far as practicable, dictated to her; as the General had anticipated, to some extent, the course which things would take under his direction, aided by his accomplice, Mr. Wilmot.

At that time, she never dreamed, for a moment, that she had a will of her own, or that it would be anything short of perdition for her to question the right of her superiors, whenever required to do their bidding. She was a mere automaton, moved as they might please. But now that new light had broken into her soul, and that she had acquired new views of her rights and duties as an accountable moral agent, who owed an allegiance to high heaven, paramount to any that she was under to any earthly power, she felt exceedingly distressed at the part that she had acted heretofore, and hardly knew what course to adopt for the future. She had consulted freely with Pietro upon the subject; but he felt himself wholly incompetent to advise her. If she went forward to the mayor, and confessed to him the truth, her former acting in the part which she had played before him, would cause him to suspect her sincerity now, and might place her in circumstances of danger to her personal liberty: for he would probably regard her as insane; consider the idea of insanity, as formerly set up, and disregarded through the testimony of the examining physicians, as being founded in fact; and order her to be returned to the Father General, who would not fail to inflict most severe punishment upon her, while Pietro would be in no situation to protect her. Once in the power of the General, and she knew her separation from Pietro would be final and for ever. She could not consult with Mr. Wilmot; for he was but the creature of the General. She could not throw herself upon the mercy of the latter, and beg him to procure the services of some one else in the deception in which she was made to bear a conspicuous part, for this would enrage him, and separate her from Pietro; since she would be instantly sent back to the convent; and she dreaded the fate that would await her there. "Perhaps," thought she, ignorant of the magnitude of the plot in which she was involved—"perhaps, after all, it may be a small affair, and that I may have but little more to do with it. I must bide my time, and act as circumstances may require. I will not, if I can help it, act dishonestly. God help me to do right."

That prayer, though but an ejaculation, was made in sincerity, and was heard in heaven. God did help her, and did reward her for daring, novice as she was in ethics, to do what her conscience approved, in spite of the difficulties which surrounded her.

While sitting in her room, one morning, reading the Protestant Bible which Pietro had given her, with her door locked, lest, though in a professedly Protestant family, her secret should be betrayed to the Jesuit General, a gentle rap announced that some one wanted her. Hastily concealing the blessed volume which had already given her moral courage as well as moral freedom, she opened the door, and was surprised to see Mr. Wilmot himself standing there, who informed her that a Mr. Prentiss, of Louisiana, desired to see her in the parlour.

"I suspect," he added, "that it is some one connected with that business of yours in the south, from a question or two that he asked of me."

Alice felt her heart beating violently within her breast, and as if she were about to suffocate; but suddenly, and with great effort, rallying herself, she informed Mr. Wilmot that she would be in the parlour in a few minutes, and turned to her toilet, as if to adjust her dress. As soon, however, as he had closed the door, and gone down stairs with his message, she burst into a flood of tears, and, throwing herself upon her knees, for a moment or two, earnestly implored guidance and help from on high. Then, arising, and bathing her eyes, she arranged her hair, and went down to the parlour.

On her entrance into this room, she saw, seated upon the sofa, a venerable-looking gentleman, of some fifty-five years of age, very genteelly dressed in a full suit of black—his countenance expressive at once of intellect and of great benignity. Rising from his seat, as Alice entered the room, he advanced to meet her, and, with a manner full of sympathy for one whom he looked upon as the victim of Romish oppression, he said—

"I have the pleasure, I presume, of taking by the hand the daughter of my much-esteemed friend, Charles de Vere. Let me assure you, Miss Emilie, for that I believe is your name, that it affords me great satisfaction to see you looking so well, and in such good health."

Thus saying, and shaking her most cordially by the hand, he led her, with the finished manners of a polished gentleman, to a seat on the sofa; and then, seating himself near her, entered into conversation with her, as to the circumstances which had prevented him from sooner paying a visit to her. He was surprised to find, however, that she was exceedingly bashful and reserved; that her colour came and went with fitful frequency; and that there was something about her whole deportment, which seemed to him singular. Yet, recollecting that she had been reared in a convent, had been for some time a nun, and was now a refugee from its walls, he felt disposed, in the kindness of his heart, to attribute it all to the past, and to account for it on the score of the scenes which she must have passed through, on her abandonment of a conventual life; Mr. Wilmot having painted to him, while waiting for Alice, in very florid colours, her arrival at his house at night, the assembling of the mob, the next morning the visit to the mayor's office, and the result—taking care to represent himself in the most favourable light possible.

Mr. Wilmot having left the parlour a few mements after Alice had entered it, Mr. Prentiss exerted himself to place Alice at her ease with him, preparatory to conversing with her upon business; but, finding this impossible, and that every effort seemed to agitate her the more—he said to her,

"Your letter addressed to your father, Miss Emilie, was received in due time, but was not read by him. He had made his will, and entrusted his business to me, as his executor. He was dead."

Here Alice's feelings completely overcame her with shame at the part she was called upon to act; and she wept freely. Thinking this most natural, under the circumstances, Mr. Prentiss proceeded—

"Do not weep, my dear Miss Emilie, so bitterly. You have every reason to comfort yourself. Although your letter did not reach your father, in time to assure him of your recantation of Roman Catholicism, and desire to return to him, still he loved you very dearly, and felt assured of your affection for him, in spite of the past. He regarded the steps that you had taken, in becoming a nun, as the result of deception upon the part of the Mother Superior of the convent, or on that of some of the priests; and, although he bitterly regretted it, yet he died at peace with you, and, in proof of this, made you his sole legatee, on condition that you would renounce Romanism, and, forsaking the convent, cease to be a nun. His estate amounts to something more than half a million of dollars. Your letter informs me that the condition had been complied with, before you became aware of its existence; you are, therefore, the undisputed possessor of this vast fortune—and will enter upon its enjoyment as soon as some technicalities of the law can be complied with, which will require but a brief delay. Meanwhile, as I presume you may want some funds for immediate use, I shall have the pleasure of handing you a thousand dollars, which I have brought with me for that purpose. The relations of friendship in which I have stood to your father, and the attitude in which I stand to the estate, and to yourself as the heiress of its wealth, will warrant me in tendering to you my services, as a protector, until you shall have made such other arrangements as you may please."

So saying, the old gentleman drew from the breast-pocket of his coat, a large pocket book, and was about to take from it the thousand dollars, when, to his utter astonishment, she threw herself upon her knees before him, and, while the tears ran down her cheeks, begged him to take pity upon one who was an orphan, indeed, but not the one he took her for, and to promise her upon his word of honour, as a Christian man and a gentleman, that he would not divulge, to a living being, what she was about to relate to him.

The old man looked upon the beautiful girl, kneeling there before him, with a heart full of compassion; and acquainted, as he had been for very many years past, as a practising lawyer of great ability, with almost all grades and phases of human crime, and to look upon the faces of timid, as well as of undaunted, rogues and criminals of both sexes, he had become a most excellent judge of human character. He read guilt and self-condemnation in her countenance, and yet, at the same time, the evidence of contrition; and wholly unable to account for what was transpiring before him, he lifted the kneeling girl to her seat, and, making her the required promise, requested her to relate her story; assuring her that he would befriend her, whomsoever she might be, if he could do so consistently with the dictates of honour.

Thus reassured, and now throwing off that restraint and painful embarrassment which she had exhibited at the commencement of this interview, and while hesitating at the course that she ought to pursue, but which disappeared when the victory was determined for conscience—Alice proceeded to tell Mr. Prentiss all that had transpired, so far as she was concerned with the affair of the substitution of herself for Emilie de Vere, from the moment of her first introduction to the Father General, in the parlour of the convent in Canada, up to that moment; assuring him, however, that, until that late hour, she never knew why she was required to personate Miss de Vere, nor who she was; much less that she was heiress to a large estate, and that she, Alice, was to be made the instrument of getting this estate into the hands of the Jesuits.

Mr. Prentiss was thunderstruck. He was a Protestant, from principle, and a member of the Methodist church. His feelings were averse to Romanism; but that so daring a plot should have been concocted in the midst of an enlightened people, involving an immense property, and should have come so nigh succeeding, for he could not doubt, for a moment, that the witnesses were all provided to establish the identity of Emilie de Vere in the pretended Alice; that this damning proof of the high-handed wickedness of the Jesuits should stare him in the face, there, in the great city of New York, staggered his belief; and he was almost disposed to look upon Alice as crazy, or as attempting to deceive him. But, when he looked at her really intelligent countenance, as it now beamed with honest satisfaction—the truth having been told;—when he thought how straightforward and connected her narrative, and that she could not possibly have any interest to subserve, while she ran a great risk in thus confiding her story to a stranger, who, if he were disposed, might do her vast injury; he was forced to the conviction that she had made a truthful confession to him and that it had become his strange privilege to look upon one of the dark plots of Rome.

"Your story," said he to Alice, "shall never pass my lips. But what do you propose to do? If I can befriend you, and I see plain enough that you stand in need of a friend, I promise you to do so.

"Your frank avowal of this plot, so far as you stand connected with it, or are aware of its features, has saved you, my child, from very serious consequences; and it would deeply interest me to know by what steps you have been led to adopt the course which you have pursued. But for this we have not time. You will tell me that the Father General resides in the city, and that this Wilmot, with whom you are staying, is a creature of his. No doubt he is already apprised, by Wilmot, of my presence here; and he will be anxious to know the result of the interview between us. Tell me, have you no friends in the city, who could be of service to you in this extremity?"

"I have but one friend, sir, in this world, so far as I know, besides yourself, and he is not in circumstances to aid me."

"Ah! who is he?" inquired Mr. Prentiss, with eagerness, as he felt interested in the welfare of the interesting girl; and, the more he thought about it, the more certain he became that the Jesuits would sacrifice her to their disappointed avarice, if they should discover that she had been the means of their defeat.

"He is a young priest," replied Alice, "the private secretary of the Father General."

"A young priest, and the private secretary of the Father General!" repeated Mr. Prentiss, with astonishment marked in his countenance and tone of voice. "This is more mysterious still. I fear, my child, that you are, indeed, hopelessly entangled in the coils of the wily Jesuits. Who is this young priest? Tell me all about him—for I would serve you if I can."

Alice then related all that has been detailed to the reader, of her first acquaintance with the secretary—their night rambles about the city—the effect, upon both their minds, of what they saw and heard—their first visit to the Protestant church, and the sermon they had heard—its effects upon them; and their subsequent study of the holy scriptures, according to the Protestant version, and subsequent private abnegation of Catholicism, with the determination of making public profession of the Protestant faith, on a convenient occasion, and their betrothment in spite of their monastic vows.

"And you say," replied Mr. Prentiss, "that you and your young friend, the secretary, only await a convenient opportunity to renounce the Catholic church, and to get married. Well, truth is assuredly stranger than fiction. Here is a villainous plot concocted by this Father General of the order of Jesuits in the United States, to get possession of an immense fortune in Louisiana, by the substitution of another person for a certain nun, in order that she may procure that fortune. A substitute is brought all the way from Canada to personate the deceased or refractory nun; she becomes acquainted with and betrothed to the private scretary of this arch-plotter; they embrace the Protestant faith, renouncing their own; and, by means of this conversion from error to truth, this very substitute herself defeats the plot, by revealing it, and saves the estate from passing into the hands of the conspirators against truth and justice. Truly, this is wonderful. There is a God that ruleth in the heavens, and among the affairs of the children of men.

"I am not wealthy," continued Mr. Prentiss, who seemed, for some moments, to be lost in deep thought, "but you are honest, child; and I think that you and this priest-love of yours would do very well if you were down in my country. What say you to going with me? I will pay your expenses and his there. You can be married, and live with me, while he is studying; and, after that, my word for it, if he is the man you represent him to be, he will never suffer you to want."

"Come," added the good old man, who seemed to be delighted with the prospect, "we will see this lover of yours this very night, and make all the necessary arrangements. You must communicate with him, somehow, and get his consent to the plan. Mind, I shall take no refusal. But we must get away from here tomorrow morning, early; or the blood-hounds will scent us out, and get on our track."

"This is Thursday," said Alice—"if the Father General does not hear that you are in town, Pietro will call for me, as usual, to go to church with him; and if he does hear it, he will be sent for me. So that, in any event, I shall get to see him. If you will stand at that corner,"—here Alice pointed out of the window to the corner of the next square, below the house in which they were—"between half-past six and seven o'clock this evening, we will pass that way, when you can join us, and we can further talk of your most generous offer."

"Agreed," said Mr. Prentiss; and, shaking Alice cordially by the hand, he bade her be of good courage, and all would yet be well.

Fortunately for all of them, the Father General was, that night, at the Convent of the Annunciation; having been sent for, posthaste, by the Mother Superior, who had some important communication to make to him. Pietro called, as usual, for Alice, who informed him briefly of what had occurred, and of the generous offer made to them by Mr. Prentiss; and, in a few minutes, they joined the kind-hearted old gentleman, who was waiting for them at the corner.

The three walked together for some length of time; and, before they parted, the offer was accepted, and the arrangements all made for their departure, the next day; both Pietro and Alice having most heartily thanked their benefactor, and invoked the blessing of heaven upon him.

The mail stage of the next day, going South, bore the old gentleman, together with the ex-nun, and former private secretary; the two latter bearing no token whatever by which the most scrutinizing could have discovered that they ever wore sacred orders.

CHAPTER XXV.

Despotic rule of the Mother Superior—A revolution in the convent—The insurrection quelled by the Father General—Alarming intelligence, on his return to New York—His frantic conduct in consequence.

THREE days had elapsed after the departure of the fugitives, under the charge of Mr. Prentiss, when, late in the afternoon of the fourth, the Father General returned home, care-worn and gloomy. He had been called suddenly to the convent, to quell a revolt among the nuns, occasioned by the tyrannical rule of the Mother Superior, who had become so capricious in her temper, and so captious in her administration of the government of the establishment, that those under her spiritual care, despairing of redress unless effected by their own act, had risen, with one accord and without a solitary exception, in open rebellion; and, deputing a committee of twelve of their number, consisting of the most influential ones among them, to present to the Superior a list of their grievances, and to demand redress, under pain of being reported to the Father General, in the event of her refusal, they ceased from all their usual avocations, and roamed about the building, at their pleasure.

Deeming it her best policy to take the lead in calling for the intervention of the General, she told the committee that she would take the matter into careful consideration, if they would resume their duties in the convent, and, as soon as they had left her room, privately despatched a messenger for that dignitary, requesting his presence at the convent, with as little delay as possible.

By some means, it became known to the nuns, shortly after his departure, that a messenger had been sent to the city; and, enraged at the duplicity of the Mother Superior, their revolt assumed, if possible, a more serious character than ever; and, when the Father General arrived, it was raging at its very height.

By dint, however, of persuading some into a good humour, flogging others who were more resolute and obstinate, and reforming some of the abuses of which complaint had been made, the General succeeded in restoring subordination and quiet among the rebellious nuns, who, accustomed as they were to blind and implicit obedience to their superiors, must have had serious grounds for complaint before they would have ventured to take a step of so grave a character as open revolution. But, during the time that he had spent at the convent, he had heard enough to satisfy his mind that the temper of the Mother Superior was becoming entirely too impetuous and uncertain to have the charge of so important a position as that which she occupied. Yet, such was her acquaintance with his own past history—such, too, the estimation in which she was held at Rome, as a woman of extraordinary talents, and one to whom the order was greatly indebted for her services in promoting their interests in the United States; and such, also, her powers as an intrigante, that he dared not remove her, without some act, on her part, which should be of so flagrant a character, and capable of so clear and decided proof, as to admit of no possible evasion of its results; and this he could hardly anticipate as possible.

In this state of mind, he returned to his residence in the city, and, it may well be supposed, in no mood to meet the startling intelligence that awaited him. Giving his horse to the groom at the door, he entered the hall; hastily unlocking a small box, which was placed there for the purpose of receiving whatever documents might be intended for him, in his absence from home, he took out of it several letters and notes, and hastened to his cabinet. Here, throwing these upon the table, and helping himself to some fine old French brandy, which he kept in a liquor-case, he sat himself down to their perusal; for, elevated in dignity as was the office which he held, it was no sinecure; and, whether at home or abroad, his lot was to labour, labour, labour incessantly, save when at his meals, or during the five hours' sleep, which was all the time he could allow even to this necessary purpose, and from which he was aroused every morning by an alarum clock, placed upon the mantel-piece in his chamber, and fixed at the early hour of four o'clock, winter and summer; he knew not what rest was. How great the pity that his truly splendid talents and indefatigable industry had not been applied to a more valuable and laudable purpose than in promoting the machinations of Jesuitism!

Having read several letters before him, he took up one of the notes, which read as follows:

"*New York, Thursday*, 9 *o'clock.*

"Most Reverend Sir—

"I have just called to inform you that a Mr. Prentiss, from Louisiana, is now conversing, at my house, with Miss Emilie de Vere, in reference to her father's estate; and, finding you from home, your servant not being able to tell me where, I write this note to let you know about it. I will call again at twelve o'clock.

"Your very humble servant,
"Wm. Wilmot."

Putting this down, he took up another, whose address was in the same hand-writing, and which read thus:

"*Thursday*, 12 *o'clock.*

"Most Reverend Father—

"I have called again, according to my promise, but still find you absent. Mr. Prentiss and Miss Emilie had a long interview, this morning; but what was the result of it I know not, as I had no opportunity of listening, and I cannot make much of her looks; though I can see a manifest charge in them, and suppose their conversation must have been of an agreeable character to her. I will call again, this afternoon.

"Your devoted servant,
"Wm. Wilmot."

A third note remained upon the table, whose contents were as follows:

"*Friday Morning*, 8 *o'clock.*

"Most Reverend Father General, &c,—

"Reverend and Dear Sir—I know not what to say, or what to do. I know that you will be angry with me; but I assure you, most solemnly, that I am in no wise to blame. O, that you were at home! But I must tell you, at once, that Emilie de Vere has left my house, and gone, I know not where. As she did not come down to breakfast, this morning, at the usual hour, we sent up to the room, and were astonished to learn that she had not spent the night at home; at least, there was no appearance of the bed having been used, which she commonly occupies. Her trunk is in her room, unopened as yet, and everything is in order; while not the least trace can be found of where she may be. If I knew where you were, I should immediately despatch a messenger for you; but, in the mean time, I will spare no pains to find her, if she is in the city. When I called at your residence, I asked, in your absence, for your private secretary; but was informed that he was not at home, and had not been since last night. Whether his absence has any thing to do with that of the missing girl, I cannot tell. Of one thing I am sure, however, that neither myself or family gave Miss Emilie any cause of dissatisfaction; and this only makes the whole affair the more mysterious.

"Awaiting your orders, I remain, with the greatest respect,

"Your faithful servant,

"WM. WILMOT."

The Father General had read this last note with profound astonishment, increasing at every fresh line, until, almost beside himself with anxiety and rage, he was about to seize his hat, and hasten to see Mr. Wilmot, when his eye rested, for an instant, upon another note, lying upon the table, in the superscription of which he immediately recognised the hand-writing of the secretary. Seizing this, and tearing it open, with an earnestness which indicated the feverish excitement of his soul, he read the following astounding intelligence:

"*New York, Thursday Night,* 11 *o'clock.*

"To the Father General of the order of Jesuits in the United States.

"REVEREND SIR,

"Before this letter will have reached you, the writer will have been placed at a distance from the city, which will effectually prevent the possibility of his being overtaken by you. Where he is gone to, or what his business, will perhaps but little interest you, when he informs you that he has for ever renounced Romanism, and embraced the cause of Protestant Christianity. Your past kindness to *me* would not permit me to leave you, without bidding you farewell, and expressing for you, personally, my warm wishes for your future health and happiness.

In the first drawer of the table in the library, you will find the instrument of my conversion to Protestantism; and the best pledge I could give you of my sincerity in wishing you well, is the request that you will read that blessed volume, as I have done, until you "shall know the truth, and the truth shall make *you* free," as it has *me.*

"Very respectfully yours,

"PIETRO DI LODETTI."

It would be impossible to portray, in language, the state of excitement into which the Father General was thrown by the perusal of this note. There he stood, pale with rage,—his eyes flashing fire, his teeth close set together; while the breath came thick and fast, hissing through his expanded nostrils. Presently, dashing the note to the floor, he stamped upon it, as though it had been the cause of his wrath, instead of being the mere vehicle through which the enraging information had reached him.

"Purgatory and perdition!" at length exclaimed the infuriated Jesuit; "What is all this? Is the whole herd of infernal spirits let loose upon me? What next, I wonder? This nun, that I have brought all the way from Canada, in order to play so important a part in the great game for a fortune for our treasury; —she, too, I suppose, will be found to have embraced that religion of fools—Protestantism—and to have eloped with this pious secretary of mine, who, instead of attending to my business, has been reading *the Bible!* St. Ignatius grant me patience! The vile hypocrite seduces the nun from her allegiance to Heaven and to the Church—runs off with her—and then, with frozen impudence, prates to me of 'the instrument of his conversion to Protestantism!'—Conversion to infamy, he should have said:—and tells *me*—aye! tells the supreme head of the Jesuits in America! —to 'read *that* BLESSED volume!'—Curses upon it, and upon the brazen-faced knave!—'as he has done, until I shall know the *truth*'—which his infamous conduct has proved to be falsehood— 'and the truth shall make *me* free, as it has *him*;—yes, he means, shall make me as great a scoundrel as himself. Holy Virgin! how can I bear such insolence as this?—But why stand I here thus, when every moment is precious—when they already have four days start of me? I will away, and take instant measures for their apprehension and return to New York; if, indeed, this is not all pretence about their having gone from the city. Who knows but they are now skulking in some vile hole in this very place; while this precious villain seeks to cover their retreat by throwing me upon the wrong scent? I will put my blood-hounds upon their track, be they where they may; and it shall not be my fault if they are undiscovered within twenty-four hours, if they have not left the city. If they have, I swear, by all the Saints in Heaven, to pursue them to the death. Ah! they little know my power, if they imagine that they can find a hiding-place from my fury, in any spot on this green earth. Thanks to the Patron Saint of our order, we are spread all over the wide world; and our agents are everywhere. Let me but get them once in my power, and they shall realize the fearfulness of my wrath, which they have so boldly provoked, and set at defiance."

So saying, the enraged priest descended to the street, and, in a few minutes, was at the dwelling of Mr. Wilmot, and seated in his parlour, waiting his return from some business errand.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The fugitives arrive at Baltimore—Reside with Mr. Barnum—A private wedding—Proceed in a vessel for New Orleans—Pleasures of a sea voyage—Alarm at the appearance of a supposed pirate—Preparation for action—Groundless alarm—Arrival at New Orleans—Piety and prosperity of Pietro and Alice.

MEANWHILE, Mr. Prentiss had reached Baltimore, with his companions, Pietro and Alice, and put up, for a day or two, at the Indian Queen, then the best hotel in the place, and kept by that prince of landlords, since gone to his long rest, old David Barnum. Being an old friend of Mr. Prentiss, the latter soon took an opportunity of mentioning to him, in confidence, that Pietro and Alice were two young friends of his, who had run away for the purpose of getting married; that he would much oblige them by bringing to the hotel some minister, to marry them at six o'clock that evening; but that it must be done in the most private possible manner, without letting any of the inmates of the family know anything about it. Mr. Barnum promised secrecy; made all the necessary arrangements; and, at the appointed hour, the two fugitive lovers were united in holy matrimony, in a private parlour of the tavern, by the Rev. Dr. Inglis, then pastor of the First Presbyterian church in the city; no other witnesses being present, save Mr. Prentiss and Mr. Barnum.

The next day, it was thought advisable for the newly-married couple to remain as much in-doors as possible, and even for them to take their meals in their own room, to avoid all possibility of encountering any one who might be on the look-out for them; whilst Mr. Prentiss made the necessary arrangements for their departure in a fine ship of some three hundred tons, which was to leave for New Orleans, on the following day.

At ten o'clock, the next morning, the anchor had been weighed, the sails unfurled, the passengers all on board, when the signal was given, the canvass filled with the freshening breeze, and bidding Mr. Barnum farewell, our little party, in high spirits, and hopeful of the future, were borne away from the wharf at Fell's Point, by the noble vessel on whose deck they stood. Passing Fort McHenry, they, after a while, emerged into the beautiful waters of the Chesapeake, and, with a smacking breeze, soon passed Annapolis, and reached the Capes, in twenty-four hours after leaving Baltimore. Here, the pilot having been discharged, the ship passed out into the waters of the ocean, and soon lost sight of land.

There was nothing novel to Pietro in a sea voyage; but to Alice it was a source of wonder and delight. The wide expanse of water—the upheaving waves—the blue sky reflected in the great mirror beneath, where the ever changing surface broke in ceaseless beauty—the finny monsters disporting in the briny fluid—the novel characters around her, found in the weather-beaten seaman,—the young sailor who was making his first voyage,—the bluff mate, and the tyrannical little captain, as he strode the deck, monarch of the kingdom, his ship, over which he reigned with an iron rule—the strange sounds which constantly fell upon her ear—these all afforded her food for pleasurable excitement, when, indeed, she was well enough to be on deck; for, although she had escaped sea-sickness, to a considerable extent, yet she suffered a good deal, at times, from nausea, which compelled her to lie down in her berth, for hours.

They had already passed these points so formidable to seamen, Bermuda and Cape Hatteras, and were off Bahama, already rounding into the Gulf of Mexico, between Cuba and the Florida Reefs, when, one morning, at day-break, the look-out from the masthead cried, "sail—ho!" Instantly the cry was responded to on deck; and the captain, whose morning watch it was, having sent for his spy-glass, swept the horizon with it, until at last he discovered the two topmasts of a rakish vessel, peering just above the sea, while the hull, as yet, seemed buried beneath its waves. When first seen, the stranger was standing athwart the ship, and crossing her path in the rear; but, as soon as the latter was discovered by the former, she changed her course, and, bracing sharply up in the wind, followed directly in the wake of the ship, with the manifest intention of overhauling or overtaking her. As soon as this manœuvre was perceived by the captain, he instantly ordered the guns, of which he had several, to be cleared for action—the large brass swivel, which stood amid-ships, to be loaded with grape-shot, and those at the sides with chain-shot; the swords and small arms to be got ready, as well as the boarding pikes, and, in short, all hands to be called, and every preparation made for defence. While this was being done, Mr. Prentiss, who had heard the uproar, came on deck, followed, in a few moments, by Pietro, who had also been awakened by the unusual tramping of the men overhead. The former immediately offered his services to the captain, in any way that he might be useful; while the latter, doing the same, hastily returned to the cabin, to acquaint Alice with what was going on, and to see that her safety was provided for, in the event of an action. Having arranged it so that she could retire into the hold, beneath the water line, the ship not being fully laden, whenever the presence of danger should make it necessary, and having soothed her fears as much as possible, he belted upon his body a pair of large pistols with which he had provided himself before leaving Baltimore, and went upon the deck.

He found that the stranger was gaining rapidly upon them; for, while the direction from which the wind blew was unfavourable for the rapid progress of the ship through the water, it was the very one most suitable to the greatest speed of the clipper brig which was coming upon them with giant strides. Her topmasts had first been seen, then her topsails, then her lower sails, and then her hull, rising black and threatening, as it were from the bosom of the ocean—her masts having that peculiar rakish appearance, for which this class of vessels—*the clipper-built* brigs of Baltimore—is so remarkable. Now she was within eight or ten miles, "walking the water, like a thing of life;" while the ship seemed to creep at a snail's pace. On she came; her sides bristling with cannon; her deck filled with dark-looking men, armed to the very teeth, with cutlasses and pistols stuck in their belts.

"A pirate!—a pirate!" passed from lip to lip of the stalwart crew on board the ship; while not a cheek blanched, nor a nerve quivered, as, standing in squads by their guns, the men looked each other in the eye, and felt that they could trust each other, and make a good defence, in the hour of need.

"A pirate;" said Mr. Prentiss to Pietro, while the lip of the latter quivered, and the moisture was in his eye, as he thought of Alice.

"A pirate!" said the Captain, in low tones, to the crew, while his small frame seemed to expand and grow larger, as, with fire-flashing eye and flushed cheek, he looked proudly upon them, as brave defenders of his gallant ship, and added, "boys—let each one be true as steel. Hold your fire until I give the order; and we will blow him out of the water."

"Aye, that we will, sir," replied a score of voices, in tones which manifested their confidence in their commander and in each other.

"Up with the ensign," cried the captain—"let us see what colours he shows."

Up went the stars and stripes, floating languidly in the breeze, from the spanker gaff. This was immediately followed by the exhibition of the same flag from the stranger.

"What does that mean?" asked the captain, of the mate.

"I do not know, sir, unless it be to deceive us. We had better keep a good look out, or we shall have a bow-chaser speaking to us, in a few minutes."

"See," said the captain, "there it comes even now."

And, while he spake, there was a cloud of smoke, a flash, a report; and a shot from one of the bow guns careered harmlessly past the ship, and sank hissing into the water just ahead of the good vessel.

"I do not know what he means!" remarked the captain, "unless he wishes us to heave to; and that I do not mean to do, unless he comes abreast of us."

On came the brig—she was now within a few yards of the ship; and, shooting ahead, wheeled round her bows, and, brailing up the lower sails, floated broadside to the ship, distant some one or two hundred feet.

"What ship is that?" cried the captain of the brig.

"The ship Mercury, of Baltimore—nine days out, bound for New Orleans. What brig is that?"

"The privateer Hero, of Baltimore, cruising on the coast for the enemy. Have you seen anything of him?" was the response of the clipper captain.

"Nothing!" answered the commander of the Mercury; and, with a hearty cheer from his crew, replied to by three times three from that of the brig, both vessels filed away, each pursuing her own track, and were soon out of sight of each other.

The guns on board the ship were again covered—the arms and ammunition put away, while the captain invited his passengers to breakfast, and, drawing forth a bottle of fine old wine, offered as a toast—"Success to the privateer!" which all drank with enthusiasm.

In due time our travellers arrived at New Orleans, where Mr. Prentiss procured horses for the three, there being no better means of conveyance, at that early day; and, in the course of a week, Pietro and his lovely wife were domesticated in the hospitable dwelling of their kind host and his most amiable companion, who, being apprised, by her husband, of the interesting history of their guests, had given them that hearty welcome for which the South has always been so proverbial.

Here Alice soon made herself useful and beloved, as well as remarkable for her simple and consistent piety as a Protestant Christian, while Pietro, bending the energies of his powerful intellect to the study of the law, soon mastered its intricacies, and was admitted to practice as a partner of his patron, Mr. Prentiss. In the course of ten years, Pietro had become one of the most prominent lawyers in all that region of country, and was elected to Congress, where he stood high as an intelligent, honest, and eloquent statesman, and was distinguised for his high-toned patriotism. He accumulated property, as well as gathered great honours in the practice of his profession; and, when he died, left an ample fortune to his two children, the young Pietro and Alice, who were worthy scions of a noble stock.

Mr. Prentiss never regretted the trip that he had made to the North, in pursuit of his ward, Emilie de Vere, nor his interview with Alice Soule, which had resulted so mysteriously in the rescue of a most interesting couple from the hands of a cruel and blood-thirsty persecution, which would have been the sure result, had this singular interposition of Divine Providence not been made in their favour—and it was to him a source of high gratification to relate the particulars of their history to his friends, whenever occasion served, and to leave them recorded among his papers, as a reminiscence of events which had occurred in his own history in a diary of his life, which he made for the use of his children.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The Father General's interview with Mr. Wilmot—An angry disputation—Crimination and re-crimination—The arch-plotter vows vengeance against his tool—Proceeds to put his threat in execution—Interview with Mr. Ketchum—The Father General's orders to him—Scouts sent in all directions, in search of the fugitives—All search in vain—Mr. Wilmot and his family ruined, and turned out in the streets—Tidings of the lost fugitives, from Father Beaupres.

We left the Father General seated in the parlour of Mr. Wilmot, awaiting his return from some business errand in town, and will now look in upon the interview which occurred between these two worthies.

When Mr. Wilmot returned from down town, as he called it, he found the Father General in no amiable mood; and, no sooner had he opened the door of the room in which the latter was seated, than the General began a tirade of abuse, which was of the fiercest character. He upbraided him, in the coarsest language, for connivance at the escape of the nun, and told him, to his face, that he was a liar and a scoundrel. Mr. Wilmot, although a Catholic, and a pliant tool in the hands of the Jesuits, having accomplished for them many a dirty piece of intrigue, was yet a man of some independence of feeling, as well as of very strong and irritable temper, and could not wholly repress the risings of resentment at the unreasonable conduct of the General, who, borne away by disappointment at the flight of Pietro and Alice, would listen to no excuse upon the part of Mr. Wilmot, but sought to wreak his vengeance upon the latter, whom he persisted in considering as an accomplice. This the latter resented, and, forgetting himself, indulged in some imprudent retorts, which but incensed the priest the more; until both were excited to the highest pitch, and fiercely hurled at each other epithets which could have only come from the lowest and most degraded convicts of our prisons and penitentiaries. At length, the General, full of malice, and convinced in his own mind, that it was wholly impossible that the escape of Alice should have been without the connivance of Mr. Wilmot, said to him:

"You shall smart for this, you scoundrel. You have, for purposes of your own, and disregardful of the interests of the church, dared to brave my anger, and aid this girl in her escape, or at least connived at it, to the great detriment of those interests—'tis well; you shall feel the weight of my anger before forty-eight hours have rolled over your head. Mark well what I say. William Wilmot, your doom is sealed!"

So saying, the General left the parlour, slamming to the door with violence behind him, and, with his countenance flushed with anger, went forth into the street, and sought, with hurried steps, his own dwelling.

Having arrived at home, and ascended to his cabinet, he drew from the iron safe a large red pocket-book, and opening it, took out a small packet of notes of hand for various amounts, and from these, three, to which was affixed the name of William Wilmot, all of them dated some time back, due one day after date, and amounting together to six thousand seven hundred and fifty-two dollars, with interest from their date; and, hastily penning a note, rang the bell to summon a servant. On the appearance of the latter, he handed him the note, and bade him take it to Mr. Ketchum, the lawyer, and bring back an immediate answer.

In about twenty minutes, the servant returned, and informed his master that Mr. Ketchum awaited his pleasure, in the drawing-room below.

"Show him up," was the response of the Father General, who was deeply engaged in the examination of some papers which were lying upon the table before him.

Mr. Ketchum, meanwhile, was introduced into the cabinet, within whose walls he was, by the way, quite intimate, having frequently visited them before; and being seated, the General proceeded to tell him, as much as he deemed necessary of the arrival and subsequent flight of the nun, requesting Mr. Ketchum to take immediate steps for the quiet search, throughout the city, for the fugitives; telling him that he would give him one thousand dollars, if successful, and pay all the expenses incurred. The lawyer, having received from the General a written description of the personal appearance of the fugitives, was about to retire, for the purpose of instituting search after them, when the Father detained him, for a moment, to say that he wished him to take the three notes which he handed to him, present them for immediate payment, and if not paid at sight, to bring suit upon them, and get the money immediately.

The lawyer, who was a nominal member of the Baptist church, but really a Jesuit in disguise, bowed low, and, promising to comply with the instructions of the General, and to lose no time, withdrew to carry them into effect. In the course of two hours, not less than thirty men were exploring the city, in every direction, in pursuit of the runaways, and inquiring at every probable or possible source for information, but in vain; while so quietly was this investigation made, and so systemized, as to the district or quarter of the city in which each of the agents pushed his inquiries, that not one of these thirty agents knew anything of the rest, or that there were others besides himself engaged in the pursuit.

Meanwhile, an officer appeared at the store of Mr. Wilmot, and, taking him to one side, presented the three notes for payment, informing him that, if they were not paid instantly, suit would be brought upon them, and the money made, without regard to the consequences.

Mr. Wilmot turned deadly pale, and told the officer that he could not possibly, at so short notice, raise such an amount; but that, if he could have four or five days in which to do it, he thought he might possibly save himself from ruin, by procuring assistance from some of his friends. The officer informed him that his orders were peremptory, and on his being told that Mr. Wilmot had not the money, and could not pay the notes, he served a writ upon him, and took the legal steps necessary to secure the property in the establishment from being made away with.

In ten days from that time, the store of Mr. Wilmot, with all its contents and the furniture of his dwelling, were sold under execution, and himself and family turned into the streets, beggared. The Father General was avenged.

No efforts, however, that he could put forth, by means of agents, by writing letters abroad, or otherwise, could procure any tidings of the fugitives, until at length a letter came from the Father Beaupres, at Bâton Rouge, informing him of the arrival, at that place, of Mr. Prentiss, together with a young man and his wife, both of foreign features, who were Protestants, however, and inmates of his family, but about whom he could learn nothing. From the description given of their persons, nevertheless, the Father General became convinced that they were the fugitives, and immediately wrote to his correspondent at Bâton Rouge, stating his conviction on the subject, and requiring the priest there to give him constant information of their movements, and to learn all he could about them. Such, however, was the high respectability of their protector, and his and their own vigilance, as they knew that they would be watched, and their lives be in jeopardy, that neither the General nor his subordinate ever dared to do aught against them, or to their injury.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Growing abuse of power by the Mother Superior—The Father General resolves to remove her by a violent death—The Mother Superior determines on a similar fate for him—Double-dealing of Sister Martina—By her exaggerated reports of the Father General's intrigues with the nuns, the Mother Superior wrought up to a state of frenzy—Fiendish exultation of Martina at the success of her scheme—The instruments of death—Soliloquy and prayer of the Mother Superior—Change in her deportment.

Meanwhile, the Mother Frances was becoming more and more involved in difficulty as regarded the administration of rule in the Convent of Annunciation. The nuns were turbulent and rebellious. The Father General received, from his private agents in the establishment, accounts of the tyranny and oppression of the Mother Superior; but, as yet, nothing had been done by her, which would afford him the opportunity for which he had so long waited—nothing that would justify her removal or degradation.

At length, wearied out, and his patience exhausted, for he was frequently called upon to visit the convent, and to interpose his authority for the adjustment of the difficulties which daily arose between the ruler and the ruled, he at last determined to take the matter into his own hands, and to adopt a course which would accomplish the desired end, without leaving any possibility of disagreeable consequences to himself. In short, he determined to hasten the departure of the good Mother from the scene of her tribulation and trial, and to place her in a situation to be canonized as a saint; rightly believing that the nuns of the Convent of the Annunciation would much rather worship her as a saint, enrolled among the departed worthies whose names are so numerous among the devotees of the Catholic church, than obey her as a tyrant on earth; and that once out of the way, no particular inquiry would be made by the inmates of the convent, as to the mode of her death; while her friends and admirers abroad could be put off with any plausible tale. Having arrived at this amiable conclusion, the General only awaited a fitting opportunity; and for this he did not wait very long.

The Mother Superior, on her part, however, had strangely enough arrived at a determination, not less full of good intention and of canonization for the Father General, than his for her. She had become apprized, in due time, not only of what had taken place between the General and the deceased Sister Theresa; but through Sister Martina, whom the former had unwittingly offended, and who, at once, to avenge herself upon the General, and to mortify and annoy the Mother Superior, concealed nothing of what she knew to have transpired, for years past, in the history of his connection with the nuns of the convent, the Superior had learned all about his intrigues and coquettings with the fair sisterhood. Nor had the statement made to her been one of plain, unvarnished facts, but had been greatly exaggerated.

Sister Martina told her that the Father General never visited the convent, without spending a portion of his time in the room of this or of that nun; that he sometimes met them in the garden, and sometimes received visits from them in his own room; that she had more than once gone to the door of the latter, when she knew that he had a nun with him, and, putting her ear to the key-hole, had listened to their whispering conversation, and had overheard remarks made about her, that were of the most offensive character. Indeed, the Sister Martina, in these conversations with the Mother Superior, spared not her imagination, but delighted to draw largely upon it, while she rejoiced in her very heart at the writhings of her listener, as the poison of jealousy and hatred diffused itself through her dark and malignant soul. With all the self-possession of the Mother Superior, the workings of her mind would betray themselves—would speak out from her countenance, as the blood boiled in her veins, and thoughts and purposes of vengeance sprang up, clamorous for execution.

Sister Martina had, by her address, wormed herself into the confidence of the Father General, and had made herself necessary to his purposes. She was, in fact, at that very time, carrying on for him an intrigue with a young and handsome nun in the convent, who had but recently taken the vows of the order, and who was one of the converts from Protestantism, made out of the family of boarding pupils. This intrigue she did not hesitate to communicate to the Mother Superior—and to apprise her that, on that day week, Sister Paulina had consented to see the Father General, in the garden of the convent, in a pretty little summer-house that had been erected about a year before, and was now covered thickly with clematis and other pretty vines in full bloom; the hour of their meeting to be midnight. Thanking her for the information, the Mother Superior kissed the Sister Martina, with great apparent affection, and, bidding her be discreet, and say nothing to the General about the conversation that had taken place between them, dismissed her, for the present, saying that she would resume it at another time.

Sister Martina turned away with an expression of high satisfaction upon her wrinkled and ugly features; while her deformed person receded from the presence of her Superior, with the stealthy tread and almost tortuous windings of a serpent; and, when she had reached her room, she exclaimed with a laugh, which was like that of a fiend who has accomplished some infernal purpose.

"Ha! ha! how the poison works! How she writhed in my hands, as I let loose the scorpions of jealousy and rage in her soul! How pale she became, and then how flushed! Ha! ha! It does me good to see her thus tortured. I know how to play with her feelings, and my revenge for all the insults and injuries she has heaped upon me, shall be to take her in my hand as I would a poor earth-worm, and my soul shall sate itself with vengeance, as I see hers writhing in agony before me. Thus, too, will I have satisfaction for the insult offered to me by the Father General. He called me the dwarfish virgin, did he, when talking with Sister Paulina, and laughed at the idea of my never having had 'an offer of matrimony?' 'Tis well, I will goad this Mother Superior until, driven to desperation, she shall commit some deed of violence; and then will I be revenged on both."

The Mother Superior had retired to her oratory, and there was engaged in walking up and down the small room; her countenance now deadly pale, as though she were suffering mortal agony, and now suffused with crimson, as though the feverish blood would burst the veins, and leap forth impatient of restraint. Violently agitated, she gesticulated angrily, while she at times muttered to herself words of angry resolution and of dark and bloody purpose. At length, she paused for a few moments, and, with her fore-finger and thumb supporting her chin as it rested upon them, her arms folded upon her bosom, she stood sternly thinking; then, approaching the escritoire, she unlocked it, and draw forth a short dagger, enclosed in a silver sheath, and, taking it from the scabbard, felt its point, with great care, as if she would assure herself of its sharpness and readiness for use. Apparently satisfied, she replaced it, and then, approaching a small table on one side of the room, upon which stood a beautiful work-box, inlaid with mother of pearl—the gift of the Father General in other days—she unlocked it, and drew forth a small, white paper, neatly folded, which, on being opened, was found to contain a whitish powder. This she looked at, for a moment, with a mingled expression of joy and sadness, and, putting it back into its receptacle, resumed her walk, from time to time, audibly expressing herself thus:

"'Tis a life of toil, and care, and anxiety, at best: why should I wish to live?

"He, whom alone I have loved in all the world, has ceased long since to care for me—has long deceived me—and now, loves another—he must atone for his infidelity to me.

"His vile paramour shall perish in his arms.

"I will be avenged!"

Thus, communing with her own thoughts, she spent an hour or more, and then, throwing herself upon her knees before the crucifix, bent her head in prayer to the Virgin, while she implored "the Mother of God" to aid her in the purposes which she had formed. Thus do the self-deluded devotees to a soul-destroying superstition, insult high Heaven, by imploring their objects of worship to assist them in the accomplishment of the most diabolical of crimes.

Having completed her orisons, she arose, calm and tranquil, and went forth from the oratory, with firm determination written upon her brow, and with a placidness of manner which did not fail to attract the attention of the inmates of the family, and was reverted to by more than one of them after the occurrence of events which transpired within the next ten days, and whose recital will occupy the ensuing chapter. Indeed, more than once, during this interval, the attention of the nuns was attracted to the very peculiar deportment of the Mother Superior, who seemed, at times, to be greatly abstracted in thought, yet to have suddenly grown kinder in the treatment of those around her, and voluntarily to to commend herself to their regard, by the reformation of some abuses, and the institution of some regulations which conduced to their comfort.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The Father General's visit to the convent—His courteous and affable reception—The Mother Superior suddenly changes her demeanour, and accuses him of inconstancy—He solemnly denies the accusation—She reiterates the charge, and requests him to swear, by the virgin, that it is false, ere she will believe him—She stabs him, while taking the oath —Paulina, another victim to her guilty passion, stabbed by the Mother Superior, in the arbour—Destroys herself by poison.

Some eight days after the time of the last conversation which occurred between the Mother Superior and Sister Martina, as related in the preceding chapter, the Father General paid a visit to the Convent of the Annunciation.

He was received, by the Superior, with an unusual degree of kindness and affability; an unusual manifestation of gratification at his arrival, which did not fail to attract his notice; and when, on inquiry of several of the nuns, in private, they informed him that, for a week past, a remarkable change seemed to have come over the spirit of their ruler; that, in short, she had spoken to them in tones of kindliness—had made several important changes in the establishment, of her own accord; and had, during that time, been very much reserved, it is true, and had worn a very pensive countenance, yet had given no fresh occasion for complaint—the General was surprised, yet pleased, and began to imagine that, at length, without any effort on his part, the Mother Superior had determined to change her policy; while he was not a little gratified to think that he would not be compelled, after all, to resort to a mode of redress which was really repugnant, even to his feelings, unscrupulous as he was in regard to the adoption of means for the accomplishment of his ends; ever acting upon the prime motto of the order, that "the end sanctifies the means."

He was introduced into the parlour of the convent, where the nuns and boarding pupils were assembled to greet him. The Mother Superior exerted herself to entertain him; her noble conversational powers appearing to be taxed to their utmost, to make the visit a most agreeable one. The tea-table was supplied with several unwonted delicacies, which were freely shared in by all present. Happiness and contentment sat, for the time, on all faces, while none seemed to enjoy the occasion more than the Superior. The Father General was surprised, yet deceived—and sought in vain to read the countenance of the Superior. She met his eye without quailing, and appeared to look upon him with unusual affection. Whatever were her real feelings, they were so completely disguised as to be beyond the reach of detection. No one for a moment dreamed of the possible occurrence of anything, in the course of a few hours, which would fill every mind with horror, and cause even the dark-hearted Martina to tremble with affright. It was a scene of masterly acting on the part of the Superior; only finding its counterpart in that which took place in her private parlour and in her oratory; within the two or three hours immediately succeeding the pleasant interview of the members of this numerous family around the tea-table—or in those in which, at different periods in the history of the Jesuits—their brightest geniuses have exhibited the most perfect control over every thought and feeling, as well as over every physical organ which could outwardly convey an idea of what was passing internally, and in which the mantle of fairest hypocrisy has been thrown over the darkest and most damnable intents and purposes.

Rising from the tea-table, the Mother Superior, with her most graceful and winning manner, invited the Father General to the private parlour, for conference, as she said, upon the affairs of the convent, and, preceding him, led the way to that room which had witnessed so many curious interviews between these two remarkable characters.

Having entered this retired apartment, where no prying eye could reach them, the Superior, having fastened the door, as she usually did when she had any very important communication to make, most courteously invited the General to be seated, and, placing herself by his side upon the sofa, took his hand in hers, and, in tones of the softest note, recalled images of the past, scenes which had long gone by, and, while the tear stood in her eye, lingered upon reminiscences of endearment and of fondness which were common to them both, and which, while they cast a sadness upon her features, touched his heart, and melted it into an unwonted mood, covered over as it was with the crust of selfishness, and indurated by the feelings and dark purposes which had so long dwelt there. He joined freely in the conversation, and seemed to take pleasure in gratifying the state of mind into which the Superior had fallen.

Thus passed away an hour, when the Superior arose, and, pushing aside the sliding panel which separated the private parlour in which they were seated, from the bed-chamber, invited the General to visit her oratory, where she had, she said, something to show him. Passing through the chamber, they soon stood in the room beyond, where, opening a small cabinet, she showed him the various presents which she had received from him, from time to time, arranged together upon the shelves. Here was the pretty work-box inlaid with mother of pearl; a richly bound breviary, with golden clasps; a beautiful crucifix in ivory; a variety of ornaments in gold, gemmed with rich jewels; several volumes in elegant bindings; and many articles of price and vertu; all of which she seemed to have treasured up with great care, and to have preserved as tokens of affection. Putting her arm around him, and reclining her head upon his shoulder, while she pointed to these gifts thus arranged in their beautiful receptacle, she said to him, in accents which fell upon his ear with peculiar significance, and which caused him to tremble, he knew not why, yet so as to be evident both to her and to himself,—

"Francois, once you loved me; but now you love me not. The evidences of your former affection I have gathered together here, and have delighted to look upon them. It is pleasant to do so still, although that affection is now transferred to another, and has been shared with others, while I fondly thought it was all my own."

"You wrong me, Louise, indeed you do," replied the General.

"Nay, Francois, do not attempt any longer to deceive me, nor yourself. You love me not. Another, now in this building, has your affections—you know it—God knows it."

"'Tis false as midnight is remote from noon-day!" cried the Jesuit.

"And yet at midnight—but two hours hence—you are to meet Paulina in the arbour in the garden. Is it not so?"

"It is not so," replied the General. "Paulina! Paulina!" he added, suddenly assuming a thoughtful attitude, as if endeavouring to call some one to his mind whom he had forgotten—"Paulina—I know no one of that name—who is she?"

"The young nun who but recently took the veil."

"Ah! I recollect her now," responded the General—"I recollect her now, but have never seen her since the day upon which, in the chapel, she assumed the religious habit. Who can have told you that I was to meet her in the garden to-night?"

"No matter who told me," said the Mother Superior, "if it be not so. You know how I loved you—with what rare affection. It is no wonder that I should be jealous, when I am conscious that I grow old, and that my attractions are not what they once were. But no matter—if you are sincere in what you have just said—if you really are not pledged to meet Paulina in the arbour to-night, at midnight, place your hand upon that crucifix, and swear, by the Virgin, that it is not so; and I will believe you, and love you with all my heart's deepest love."

Without a moment's hesitation, the Jesuit approached the crucifix, and, standing with his back towards the Mother Superior, placed his hand upon the symbol of his faith, and made the solemn declaration of his undivided attachment to, and affection for, her.

Meanwhile, as he had advanced to the crucifix, and while his hand was placed upon it, the Superior had drawn forth, from her bosom, the dagger whose point she had examined with such care a few days before, and, stepping up quietly behind him, just as he pronounced the words—

"I call upon thee, most Holy Mother of God, to witness that I love Louise, and Louise on earth—"

She plunged the dagger to his heart, crying, as she did so—

"Perjured wretch! die, and go to perdition, with the damning falsehood yet trembling upon thy lip. Go, reap the abundant harvest of your falsehood and treachery, in the regions of eternal infamy and woe!"

With a cry of mortal agony, the Father General fell to the floor, suddenly turning half round, as the weapon penetrated his vitals, so as to fall not upon his face, but upon his side; and the blow, having been but too fatally aimed at his heart, a convulsive throe or two ensued, and Louise stood alone, there in her oratory, with the dead body of Francois Jubert lying at the foot of the crucifix, upon which he had but the moment before perjured himself.

Louise, the Mother Superior, drew from her pocket a handkerchief, with which she carefully wiped the blade of the dagger;

and then, replacing the latter in its sheath, and throwing the handkerchief upon the floor, she stood for a few moments with her arms folded, looking down upon the dead body, and thus exclaimed—

"If there be an hereafter, Francois Jubert, you are now in perdition, and I am avenged for the wrongs you have done me. Two hours more, and she, whom you would have ruined, this night, as you have ruined me, will be in eternity too! I, too, shall quietly follow. The morning's sun will arise to see us pale and ghastly, and to tell to the world the story of woman's love, of woman's revenge! Francois, I will soon be with you."

So saying, she turned away, locking the door of the oratory behind her, as she entered the bed-chamber, and throwing herself upon the bed, remained quietly there until the convent clock told the hour of midnight.

Arising from her couch, she threw a cloak around her, and, drawing the hood over her head, passed through the private parlour, carefully locking the door, and groping her way along the corridor, and down the great stairway until reaching the back door, she went out into the dark night, and stealthily advanced to the garden. Here she found the gate closed; and, rightly supposing that no one as yet had passed before her, she entered, and hastened to the arbour. Here, listening for a moment to ascertain if any one were there, she entered, and, taking her seat, awaited the coming of the Sister Paulina.

The arbour was constructed of lattice work, with large intervals, but was so thickly overgrown with clematis and other running vines, as that whatever little light was emitted from the stars was entirely excluded, and all was darkness within. Yet, as the entrances were at either end, one seated within could very distinctly recognize the person of him or her who should seek to enter.

The Superior had not been long seated before a light step was heard advancing towards the arbour; and presently she distinguished the figure of the Sister Paulina peering into the darkness, as if endeavouring to ascertain if any one were there.

"I will seat myself for a while," she said, "until he comes. He will be here presently."

So saying, she entered, and seated herself directly opposite to the Superior, who, having previously drawn forth the same dagger which she had used, a short time before, for the destruction of the Father General, suddenly sprang forward, and, seizing the trembling girl, before she had time to scream or to make the least resistance, plunged the weapon into her bosom, exclaiming, as she did so—

"Die, base wanton; I am the Mother Superior."

The poor girl was not instantly killed; and the Superior, finding this to be the case, gave her two successive stabs with the sharp instrument, before signs of life ceased to be exhibited; then, throwing down the weapon, by the side of the dead body, she left the arbour, and, regaining the building, went up stairs to her chamber; leaving the door, leading directly into it, unlocked. Going to a table upon which stood a decanter of water and a goblet, she took from her bosom the folded paper, which she had looked at in her oratory, a few days before; and pouring its contents into the water, she drank the poisoned liquid, without pausing or hesitation. Then, lying down upon her couch, she composed her limbs decently, and soon fell into a lethargy, from the effects of the poisonous drug she had swallowed. Anon the potion begun to work its deadly office; and, ere the light of morning dawned on the convent, the Mother Superior, burdened with all her crimes, was summoned into the presence of her Maker.

Thus perished, by her own hand, this extraordinary woman, who, had she been early trained up in the principles of a pure and holy religious life, might have become an ornament to her sex. Deprived, in early life, of the care and attention of her mother, and subjected to the stern and almost unparental temper and disposition of her father, she, no doubt, early imbibed some of those incipient traits of character which so awfully marked her future guilty career. And then, another important adjunct in smothering her better feelings was, the circumstance of her being subjected, in the days of her youth, to be a sufferer from the direful events which overspread her unhappy country, during the reign of terror that marked the French revolution. But the great source from whence sprung the turbid streams which blackened and defiled her future life, was unquestionably to be traced to the soul-destroying dogmas and vile superstition which so peculiarly characterize the Romish system. She was undoubtedly a woman of strong passions; and, for the accomplishment of her purposes, and the attainment of any object she had bent her mind upon, no obstacle appeared too difficult for her to surmount, nor any crime too heinous for her to perpetrate, so that, by so doing, she might be enabled to gratify her pride, her lust, and her ambition. To rule and domineer over others was her darling object; and woe be to that daring individual who called in question, or endeavoured to thwart, her authority! No subtlety or cunning could circumvent her vigilance. She was a thorough Jesuit; and duplicity and subterfuge were allies which she had ever ready at command, to assist her in any nefarious project on which her mind was bent. In short, she was a fit instrument to carry out the great object which Popery has ever aimed to accomplish, namely, to increase the number of its deluded victims, however base and dishonourable the means employed to accomplish that object, and to destroy heretics, and every other obstacle that opposed the success of this unholy design.

CHAPTER XXX.

Alarm and consternation in the convent—Discovery of the dead bodies—The bodies of the Mother Superior and Sister Paulina laid in the same grave—All efforts to elucidate the mystery in vain—The offices of Father General and Mother Superior filled up—Partial revelations and suspicions of the dying Sister Martina—Closing remarks.

GREAT was the consternation, the next morning, in the convent, when, after matins, from which the nuns missed both the Father General and the Mother Superior, as well as the Sister Paulina—a servant went to the room of the Superior, and found her, after ineffectually knocking at the door, stretched lifeless upon her bed; her very handsome features wearing a very slight indication of a momentary pang of pain.

The servant was horror-struck at what she beheld, and soon raised the alarm, by her cries, when the room was quickly thronged by the astonished and terror-stricken nuns, who, gazing at the corpse, and then in one another's faces, seemed to ask of each other the question—"Who has done this?" No answer, however, was returned: and all was enveloped in mystery, perplexity, and fear.

As soon as the excitement respecting the deceased Mother Superior was somewhat abated, the attention of the nuns was directed to the missing Father General. Search was made for him, thoughout the convent, in every room to which they could gain access, but he was nowhere to be found; and they gave over their endeavours to find him, under the impression that he had left the convent.

The anxiety of the nuns, on account of the non-appearance of the Sister Paulina amongst them, was not so great; as they imagined she might be detained in her cell, through indisposition. Great, however, was the consternation and dismay of the whole sisterhood, when, an hour or two after finding the body of the Mother Superior, two or three of the nuns, who were walking in the garden, entered the arbour, and there found the dead body of Sister Paulina, stabbed in three places, and surrounded by a pool of blood. They were almost petrified with astonishment and dread, and looked around, expecting that some assassin was lurking near, and that they might probably be the next victims. Recovering, however, from their stupor, they summoned assistance, and had the body conveyed into the house.

At length, on the afternoon of the second day, after they had interred the Mother Superior and the Sister Paulina, and that most strangely too, in the very same grave, it occurred to some of the nuns that they had not looked into the oratory. This they found locked; but, on breaking into the room, how they were shocked to discover the lifeless form of the Father General upon the floor, lying at the foot of the beautiful crucifix. Everything in this room, as in the bed-chamber and in the private parlour, wore an air of intense repose. There were no signs of violence, or of mortal struggle between contending parties. Who could have perpetrated the dark deeds which met the gaze of the nuns, and of the priests who had been summoned to their aid, in the oratory, the bed-chamber, and the arbour in the garden?

It was a mystery which none could unravel. And, taking into consideration the high position of at least two of the parties—the head of the order of Jesuits in the United States—the Superior of the Convent of Annunciation—there was a daring attached to the perpetrator of the deed, which showed that the assassin was of no common order.

Every nun, every inmate of the family, was carefully and most rigidly scrutinized, questioned, and cross-questioned, but all in vain: nobody knew aught about it, save those who had been actors in that dreadfully tragedy, and they were past being questioned. Sadness and gloom fell upon the inhabitants of the convent. The suite of rooms, hitherto appropriated to the Mother Superior, were carefully locked up—everything remaining just as she left it, and continued so for years.

The place vacated by the death of the Father General was duly filled—that of the Mother Superior was also supplied—the dead had been buried and well-nigh forgotten, when, at length, the Sister Martina came to lie upon her death-bed; and, conscience prompting her, she sent for the then Superior of the convent, and related to her the events, in the life of her predecessor, with which the dying nun stood in anywise connected; the conversations which had taken place between the Mother Frances and herself; her jealousy and writhings under the feelings which the conduct of the Father General had awakened in her bosom; and the suspicions that were aroused in the mind of Sister Martina, on the discovery of the dead bodies, that the Mother Frances herself was the murderer of the General, of the nun, and then had taken poison to destroy her own life.

There seemed, to the Mother Superior, to whom this relation was made, but too much ground to believe that it was as the dying nun suspected; but, beyond these suspicions, there was but little positive evidence of any kind.

The threats uttered against Julia Moreton, as recorded in another portion of this work, and their fulfilment, will, together with the events transpiring in the life of Pietro di Lodetti and his wife, subsequent to their settlement in Louisiana, afford material for a continuation of the story, should the reception of that which is now given to the public, be such as to induce the writer to venture upon a second application of his pen to a sort of composition to which it has been hitherto a stranger. He does not pretend to say that any of the personages of this drama are real, nor any of the events which he has recorded are true; but he does believe that events, not wholly dissimilar, have occurred, and may occur again. He does believe that the true spirit of Jesuitism has been portrayed; and that dark, and forbidding, and abhorrent, as may be the picture, it but too faithfully depicts the principles and practices of an order which requires vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, only in order to wealth, to impunity, and to sensual indulgence—to the subversion of civil, religious, and intellectual liberty, and to the substitution of an iron oppression and a bloody superstition. He has, in short, written his story in as strong terms as he was capable of, in order to symbolize that which cannot be too darkly or too strongly coloured, and in reference to which, after all that has or can be imagined of it, it may still be affirmed that *truth is stranger than fiction.*

CONCLUSION.

Summary—Lessons to be gained from a right use of the narrative—The duty of parents—Cautions to young persons—Connection between Popery and infidelity—Sure downfall of error and superstition—Earnest entreaty to embrace the truth.

In reviewing the foregoing narrative, the reader may perceive some very important lessons. The first is, that, when we sustain the responsible office of parents, we should be very careful in the training and culture of the minds of the children committed to our care. The second, that the impressions we imbibe in the days of our childhood and youth, have much to do with our career in after-life. The third, that we should be very cautious how we give ear to those who are ever ready to instil into our minds erroneous and pernicious principles and tenets, which, if fostered and cherished, may, eventually, peril the safety of our never-dying souls. There are other important lessons to be gained by the careful perusal and diligent study of this narrative; but these, for the present, shall suffice for the purpose of a short comment.

There are few parents but wish the temporal and eternal welfare of their offspring; and yet, how often is it the case that, from a mistaken policy or want of proper judgment, the course they take for the attainment of the object they have at heart, is the one diametrically opposed to the accomplishment of their wishes. This has been exemplified in several instances in the course of this narrative. Parents, who had a conscientious dread of the evils of Popery, yet, without seriously reflecting on the step they were taking, have placed their children in the very vortex of the evils they most dreaded. Beware, then, I say again, parents, how you act in regard to the training and culture of those who are dear to you.

But what shall I say to those who are in the morning of life?—whose prospects are bright and glowing with fancied happiness in store for their future years? You have not yet begun to experience the realities of life; but, be assured, those realities will be dark and troublesome, or bright and cheering, according as you commence your career in life's journey. You are surrounded by temptations; and one false step may be productive of incalculable misery in this world, and everlasting woe in another. Store, then, your youthful minds with the truths of God's word; these will guide and direct you in the devious path which you may have to tread; and will prevent you from listening, with a willing ear, to the wily sophistry of those who would endeavour to lead you astray from the path of rectitude and truth, into the way that ends in destruction, misery, and eternal death.

The present age is peculiarly remarkable for the strenuous exertions which the enemies of the pure and unadulterated religion of Jesus Christ are making to bring discredit upon its divine doctrines and precepts. Infidelity (and I consider the Romish superstitions as nearly assimilated to infidelity as any false system can be) is openly and unblushingly advocated in the ears of congregated thousands of our fellow-creatures. There are Jesuits,—not belonging to the Romish system only,—going about the length and breadth of our land, striving to propagate their soul-destroying principles, and imbue the minds of the ignorant and unwary with error, superstition, and unbelief. But what avail? All their puny efforts will be abortive, and will recoil upon their own heads.

Who, that have read the foregoing pages, but must shudder at the harrowing scenes and the dreadful acts therein portrayed?—And these are the consequences of the blind implicit faith in a system repugnant to the genius of Christianity. Roman Catholicism, as it is believed and practised in most of the monasteries and convents, is a system that is fraught with the grossest delusions, and pregnant with the most calamitous results to those who believe in its fallacious doctrines. Many who have held high places in the Catholic church, in past ages, have been tained with the blackest crimes; and, even in the present day, there are dignitaries in that church, on the continent of Europe, whose lives and conduct are as different from the lives and conduct of the Apostles, as light is from darkness. I would not be uncharitable, and denounce all who are connected with that denomination. There are good men to be found amongst that body; but, taken as a whole, the great majority are designing, base, hypocritical, and treacherous. But it is the system—religion it can scarcely be called—which I denounce: it is closely connected with infidelity, and is the source of more crime and suffering than any other system that prevails amongst mankind. "Come out of her, then, my people, and be ye separate; touch not the unclean thing, lest ye be defiled."

The time is approaching, when Popery, and every other false form of worship, shall give place to the genuine and unadulterated worship of the true and living God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ:—when the mists of ignorance and superstition shall be chased away by the light of the life-giving beams of the Word of Truth. Yes, Babylon must fall; the Mother of Harlots must be brought low; and images and crucifixes, and every other idol, shall be cast away; and peoples and nations shall bend the knee to Jesus, and acknowledge him Lord over all, blessed for evermore! May all who read these pages, be instrumental, through the blessing of Almighty God, in hastening that glorious time, when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of God, and of his Christ.

THE NUN;

OR,

SIX MONTHS' RESIDENCE

IN A

CONVENT.

BY

REBECCA THERESA REED,

LATE INMATE OF THE URSULINE CONVENT, MOUNT BENEDICT, CHARLESTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS.

PHILADELPHIA:
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PREFACE.

Two or three facts, of importance to a clear understanding of the following narrative, should be kept in view by the reader, and are therefore stated briefly in a preface to this edition of the work. The chief subject of it, Miss Rebecca Reed, now of Boston in the United States, is not so responsible for the publication as would at first on the face of the narrative appear. The manuscript was prepared by her, from copious notes which she took as she had opportunity; of this there can be no doubt. But it may be doubted whether she would at her own instance ever have sent it to the press. It was first published by a number of her friends in that city, who united their persuasions to overcome her reluctance to its appearing in print; partly to shield her from the reproaches that her escape from the convent, and her subsequent conversations and correspondence about its discipline, were bringing upon her; but principally to counteract the prevailing passion among Protestants in favour of a convent education for their daughters, which, among other things, appeared to be giving an impulse to the advances of Popery in that quarter of the world.

In little more than two years after Miss Reed's escape, the convent was destroyed by fire. It had become so unpopular and so unsightly an object, that a mob at length assembled and burnt it to the ground. It was to be expected that its proprietors and advocates would charge this outrage on the efforts of Miss Reed and her friends to bring the institution into contempt. Hence the Superior, in her answer to Miss Reed's narrative, represents her as saying that her brother-in-law and another friend declared that *the convent should come down.* As no saying of this kind occurs in the narrative itself, and as Miss Reed protests against ever having uttered anything like it, the calumny has been imputed to the Superior's desire to confirm suspicion against her brother-in-law, who was then under indictment on a charge of abetting the incendiarism.

The fact is, whatever influence the narrative had upon the public judgment and feeling against the convent, no unbiassed person could imagine anything like a conspiracy in the family, or among the friends of this young lady to destroy the property of the establishment and hazard the lives of its inmates. The outrage was owing to a more extended and less recent prejudice against such institutions generally, and that more particularly. Their reported and acknowledged abuses—their inconsistency with the spirit and letter of American laws—their tendency to foster political and moral corruption, and to shelter criminals while they produced crime—were sufficient to account for violence, which yet every friend to good order must deplore.

SIX MONTHS IN A CONVENT.

IN the summer of 1826, while passing the Nunnery on Mount Benedict, Charlestown, Massachusetts, in company with my schoolmaster, the question was asked by a young lady, who I think was a Roman Catholic, how we should like to become Nuns. I replied, after hearing her explanation of their motives for retirement, &c. "I should like it well;" and gave as my principal reason, their apparent holy life, my love of seclusion, &c. The conversation which passed at that time made but little impression upon my mind. But soon after, the "*Religieuses*"* came from Boston to take possession of Mount Benedict as their new situation. We were in school, but had permission to look at them as they passed. One of the scholars remarked, that they were Roman Catholics, and that our parents disapproved of their tenets. The young lady who before asked the question, how we should like to become Nuns, and whose name I have forgotten, was affected even to tears in consequence of what passed, and begged them to desist, saying, "They were saints, God's people, and the chosen few;" that they "secluded themselves, that they might follow the Scriptures more perfectly, pray for the conversion of sinners, and instruct the ignorant† in the principles of religion." This conversation, with the solemn appearance of the Nuns, affected me very sensibly, owing probably to the peculiar state of my feelings. The impressions thus made remained on my mind several months; and at the age of thirteen years and four months, I asked my parents if they were willing I should become an inmate of the convent. This proposition my parents were inclined to treat as visionary; but they soon discovered themselves to be in an error. Nothing of consequence was said upon the subject; but soon after, owing to the delicacy of my health, and other reasons, it was deemed expedient for me to visit my friends in New Hampshire; and being fond of retirement, this arrangement accorded very well with my feelings.

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* By the term "*Religieuses*," I mean those who constitute the Ursuline Community.

† By the word *ignorant*, is meant what they term heretics.

While in New Hampshire, I spent many pleasant hours, which I think of with delight. Memory oft brings to view, and faithfully delineates those hours of retirement and happiness which I imagined I should spend, were I an inhabitant of a cloister.

While writing this narrative, I often lament my little knowledge of history; for, had I been more acquainted with it, I do not think I ever should have united myself to an institution of this nature. But to proceed; I never could prevail on my parents to say much on this subject. I kept silence, resolving in my own mind to become acquainted with some one who would introduce me to the Superior of the Ursuline Community, but did not ask any one till after the death of my mother. Previous to that event, I had become acquainted with Miss M. H., a domestic in Mr. H. J. K.'s family, near my father's house, in Charlestown.

After my mother's decease, while residing with my father, my sisters being absent, Miss H. came to our house, and begged me to keep her as a domestic a little while, as she had no place. She had walked a great way for the purpose of seeing Mr. K., who had moved away. This was in the fall of 1830. After consulting with my father, I concluded to let her stay. She found me in great trouble and grief, in consequence of the absence of my two younger sisters, whom I very dearly loved, and who had gone to reside with my sisters in Boston. After family prayers were over, and I about retiring, I stepped from my room to see if Miss H. had extinguished her lamp, when, to my surprise, I found her kneeling, and holding a string of beads. I asked her what she was doing. She did not speak for some time. When she did, she said she was saying her "Hail Marys."* I asked her what the "Hail Marys" were, at the same time taking hold of the beads. She then said, "I say my prayers on these to the Blessed Virgin." My friends will, of course, excuse my curiosity at this time, for I had never before learned their manner of praying to saints and angels. Before I left her, she showed me an *Agnus Dei*,* which she wore to preserve himself from the temptations of Satan. I cannot remember all the conversation which passed the next day on the subject; but I learned that she had been acquainted with the nuns in Boston, and was also acquainted with the Superior.

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* *Catholic prayer, translated from the Latin.*—"Hail, Mary! full of

The first pleasant day, I asked her to accompany me to the Superior, which she did, and appeared, by her questions, to know my motive. She introduced me to the Superior in the following manner:—We were invited by a lay sister† to sit, who, after retiring, in a few moments made her appearance, requesting Miss H. to see her in another room. Soon after, the Superior came in, and embraced me with much seeming affection, and put the following questions to me:—How long since the death of my mother? Whether I ever attended the Catholic Church, or knew any thing of the principles of their religion? What I had heard respecting them—of their order—my views of it? What progress I had made in my studies? Whether I had attended much to history—knew any thing of embroidery, drawing, or painting, or any other ornamental work? Whether I had ever assisted in domestic affairs? After which questions, taking my hand, she said, "O, it feels more like a pancake, than any thing else."‡ She inquired in what capacity I desired to enter the institution?—whether as a recluse or a scholar? Whether I had done attending school, &c.? I replied,

grace; our Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus! Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

* Lamb of God;—a small piece of wax sewed up in silk in the form of a heart.

† Those nuns who are occupied in domestic affairs.

‡ This may appear laughable; but as I intend to publish all which will be for the benefit of the reader. I cannot refrain from mentioning this, in order to show the course of flattery, &c. made use of by the Superior and those connected with the establishment, to draw the inexperienced into their power, and make them converts to the religion of the Pope.

that I did not consider my education complete—that I wished to go into the school attached to the nunnery, on the same terms as other pupils, until I had made sufficient progress to take the veil, and become a recluse—that my father was averse to my becoming a *nun* ; but I was of opinion, that he would concur with my episcopal friends, in not objecting to my becoming a *pupil.* In the course of the interview, the Superior conversed much upon the Scriptures, and intimated, that I ought to make any sacrifice, if necessary, to adopt the religion of the Cross—repeating the words of our Saviour, "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me, &c."

At a subsequent interview, the Superior desired me to see the Bishop or Clergy, remarking, she believed I had a vocation for a religious life, and the Bishop would tell me whether I had or not. She also asked if I was acquainted with a Catholic friend who would introduce me to the Bishop, and mentioned a Mr. R. who would introduce me to him. I was unacquainted with Mr. R., but had seen him at my sister's house in Boston. She said that the Bishop or Mr. R. would also discuss the matter with my father, and reconcile him to Catholicity. After consulting some friends who were in favour of the Catholic religion, I consented to see Mr. R. ; who, being requested, called at my father's, gave me some scripture proofs of the infallibility of the Romish church ; as, "Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I build my church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it ;" and "Whose sins ye retain they are retained, and whose sins ye remit they are remitted." "He that will not hear the church, let him be to thee as an heathen man and a publican." He (Mr. R.) desired I would secrete the paper upon which the texts were quoted. He then took his leave, saying he would call to see me in town soon at the Misses S., when he would introduce me to the Bishop.

I will here remark, that previous to my joining the community, I heard of many miracles wrought by Catholic priests. Mr. G. brought a lady one day in a chaise, to show me her eyes, which were restored by means of a priest, Dr. O'F. She, as Mrs. G. stated, was totally blind ; but having faith in miracles, she knelt to her confessor, requesting him to heal her. After touching her eyes with spittle and holy oil, she immediately "received her sight."

Before the next interview with the Superior, I visited my Protestant friends, the Misses S., when Mr. R. called and proposed to introduce me to the Bishop. He accordingly accompanied me to the Bishop's, and introduced me as the young lady who wished to become acquainted with the tenets of the church, and recommended to him by the honoured Mother the Superior, with directions for his ascertaining my vocation as a fit subject for a recluse. The Bishop asked me if I knew the meaning of the word "Nun;" how long I had thought of becoming a nun; my opinion, and the opinion of my friends in regard to Catholicity; and as my feelings were easily wrought upon, more particularly at this time, questions were put to me, which more mature deliberation leads me to think were put under the impression that I was very ignorant, and which were very unpleasant for me to answer. He even went so far as to judge my secret thoughts, saying he knew what was then passing in my mind. I then took my leave, undecided what course to pursue, and very little edified by the conversation of the Rt. Rev. Bishop. The Bishop gave directions to Mr. R. to purchase a catechism of the Catholic Church in the diocese of Boston, published with the approbation of the Rt. Rev. Bishop Fenwick, which I refused to accept.

About a week afterwards, I called upon the Superior, and made her acquainted with my conversation with the Bishop, likewise with my refusal of the catechism. On learning that my desire was still strong to become an inmate of the convent, she smilingly said, that for one so young as I was to wish to seclude myself from the world, and live the life of a *religieuse*, was impossible. I remarked, I did not like the Bishop so well as I expected. She exclaimed, "Oh! he is one of the servants of God; he did so to try your vocation;" and said that I should like him the better the next time I saw him.* After recommending me to pray for grace, she caused me to kneel and receive her blessing; after which she embraced me, and I returned to my father's house. I shortly after visited the Misses H., in Charlestown, and was introduced to Mrs. G., who was acquainted with the tenets of the Catholic Church, and also with Mr. B., the Catholic priest. After a short acquaintance with her, I was requested to converse with Mr. B., the priest, which I did, and liked him very much. He also supplied me with books, from which I learned that I ought to venerate and receive the religion of the Catholic Church as the *only one and true religion.*

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* I did like him the next time that I called upon him, for he conversed in the most solemn manner, and after learning my name, said, "Is it possible that you have a saint's name!" and gave me St. Theresa as my namesake, a beautiful wax figure habited as an Ursuline nun.

On Good Friday evening, I heard the most affecting Catholic sermon* I ever listened to, upon the Passion of our Divine Redeemer. I soon after visited at Mrs. G.'s, where I saw a fine drawing, exhibiting the peaceful and flourishing condition of the Holy and Apostolic Church, until the time of the Reformation, under Martin Luther. Mrs. G. recounted the sufferings of the Catholic Church in consequence of this "pretended reformation." My friends will understand, that by this time I had become a constant visitor at the convent. On being sent for at one time by the Superior, I met the Bishop at the convent, who was playing with the dogs; at the same time, the Superior, hastily approaching, embraced me in the most affectionate manner; as she did ever afterwards, when I visited her at the convent. She introduced me to the Bishop again, who did not appear to recognise me, and said that I was sister to the lady who visited him in Boston. At this time I thought the Superior and Bishop the most angelic persons living, and, in one instance, gave way to anger in consequence of hearing a few words spoken against them. On being told that my mind remained still the same, the Bishop remarked, "I will pray for you;" and recommended to me the advantage of continuing under the instruction of the priest, and said he should like to see my father or sister.

After an interview with the Bishop, I returned to my father, who was much displeased with the steps I had taken, and bade me renounce all connexion with the Catholics, or leave my friends. (This he said in a moment of excitement.) But being so much attracted by the apparent holiness of the inmates of the convent, and viewing this as the only true church, I wished to become a member of it.

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* I had before attended the lectures in Boston, at the time of the controversy between Dr. Beecher and the Catholics.

Perhaps it will be proper to state some of Mrs. G.'s conversation. After hearing from her a pleasing account of the life of a nun, &c., I mentioned I should like to become one, and would, if I could prevail on my father and friends to consent; but unless I could, I must despair, as they would not be willing to advance the *money* which would be needed to go there. She replied, "It is not *money* that will ever induce them to take you; it must all be work of God." She asked me what my Church friends* said upon the subject. On my telling her that they were reconciled to my entering the institution, particularly as a scholar; that they liked the seclusion of the convent, &c., Mrs. G. stated that she could not see the least objection to my following my own inclination. I then took my leave, promising to see her at my friend Mrs. H.'s. The next time I saw her, she advised me to leave my father's house and all, for the sake of Christ. She said she would procure me ornamental work, which would support me, independent of my relatives, &c., which she did. I thanked her most heartily, and told her I thought I should be happy if I were certain of going to a cloister. She gave me her word that I should. I then took up with her advice, and left my friends, I thought for life, as I had no doubt but that I should soon enter the convent, resolving to leave all for the love of God, and to consecrate the remainder of my days to his service. I believed Mrs. G. to be my sincere friend, and an Episcopalian, as she had always told me she was, and placed myself under her protection. After visiting some Protestant friends, I found means to procure my clothing, &c., and went immediately to reside opposite the Catholic church. I employed myself while there in doing ornamental work for my Catholic friends, and also in working lace for the Bishop, the altar, &c. About this time I was offered compensation, but refused it, and received a present of ten dollars, a crucifix, a pearl cross, and two books, with my name stamped upon them in gold letters, which presents I received as tokens of kindness and friendship.† And wishing to deny myself of anything worldly, I gave up what jewellery I had, telling them I knew of no greater sacrifice I could at that time make, than to give up all the treasures my dear mother had left me. I also gave my globe and gold-fish, which were a present to me. At that time I thought I was holy, and could hardly speak to a Protestant. I had read many Catholic books. My time was wholly employed in working for the Catholics, except my hours for meditation and prayers.

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* My friends of the Episcopal Church thought that I could have the privilege of writing when I desired to see them.

† I wish to have it understood, that the lettering on these books was my new name, "Mary Agnes Teresa." My baptismal name, it will be

The ordinance of baptism* was administered to me by Mr. B., himself and a Mrs. P. standing sponsors for me—my former baptism being considered by the Catholics *invalid.* While in Charlestown, I stood sponsor for Mrs. G.'s daughter, of whom I shall speak in the course of this narrative. I would here remark, had I taken up with the advice given me by many of my friends, I should not now have the unpleasant duty of relating these facts. But so it was; I had imbibed a relish for what I supposed to be "real pleasures," but which, alas! I have found, by sad experience, to be like the "waters of Marah." At an interview with the Superior, I was introduced to two of the "chosen Religieuse," the mother assistant and Mrs. Mary Benedict. The first question asked was, what word I brought from my friends. On my hesitating to give an answer, she insisted upon knowing what they said; on which I told her all they had said, word for word, as nearly as I could recollect; also the advice I received from a Mr. E., which appeared to displease her very much; and although she strove to suppress her feelings, it was evident she was much displeased.

After some questions respecting Mr. E., the Superior remarked, he was none other than the man who made children's books. She also questioned me with regard to a conversation which took place between my brother and myself on Charlestown

recollected, is Rebecca Theresa. The books were given me by Mrs. G., who said they were from the Bishop; and he afterwards, in the convent, confirmed the statement, saying, he knew at that time of my vocation, and for that reason sent me a religious name, which was a saint's name.

* At the time of my baptism I was anointed with oil; a piece of salt was put in my mouth, the priest breathing three times upon me, and touching my eyes, ears, and nose with spittle, speaking Latin all the while. They profess to take these ceremonies from the Scriptures.

bridge (which was published in the "JESUIT,"* highly exaggerated,) and appeared greatly pleased with the language of my brother, saying, with peculiar emphasis, "O, you will die a martyr to the cause of truth, should you die under persecution." I took my leave of her, promising to call again when she should desire.

After this, she wrote a letter to my father, of the contents of which I was then ignorant, but have since learned it contained offers of two or three quarters' schooling, free of expense. My father says he treated it with contempt; and his answer by the bearer was briefly this—"He wished me to have nothing to do with that institution; that my friends would prefer my going to a Protestant seminary." At my next interview with the Superior, she however told me, my father had become reconciled to my remaining with them two or three quarters, after which time he would inform them whether he could consent to have me stay there longer as a teacher of music.† She previously presented me with some slate pongee, which was the uniform dress worn by the scholars in the public apartments, telling me at the same time to prepare myself, and have my things ready by such a day. She asked me, if I should come without the consent of my Boston friends, if I supposed they would insert anything in the public papers, or make any disturbance, or come there for me? to which I replied, I thought not. After preparing myself for a public reception, I visited the Superior, when she said, if I would place myself under her care for this time, she would protect me for ever, and particularly from the persecution of the "heterodox," and she looked to heaven above for her reward.‡ She then stated that the

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* I afterwards asked Priest B. to explain what it meant; he said Dr. O'F. made a mistake in writing it for the press; and he promised it should be corrected.

† I attended music, because the Superior desired it; and she assured me there was no need of assistance from my friends, even if my father had consented, for I could with my needle be of sufficient use to the community to support myself without their assistance. She also told me I should study when I chose, and might have the privilege of coming into the Religieuse Community to recite to her.

‡ I wish it to be understood, that being influenced by the Superior and

Bishop had concluded to receive me, not as a member of the public department, but as a "Novitiate," which would screen me from the questions of the Protestant scholars. She also added, that I should be received as the other sisters were, and that we were to support ourselves by our talents and industry. The names of the sisters were, Mrs. Mary Ursula,* Miss Mary Magdalene, Miss Mary Joseph, and Miss Mary Austin. The latter was both teacher and pupil. I answered that I should like those conditions best. She then desired me to kneel down and take the following obligation:—"I do, with the grace and assistance of Almighty God, renounce the world for ever, and place myself under your protection, from this day, to consecrate myself to his honour and glory, in the house of God, and to do whatever obedience prescribes, and tell no one of this obligation but Mr. B., in confession." After this, the Superior summoned two of the "Choir Religieuse," who conducted me to the garden, where they left me to amuse myself. Presently the Superior joined me, wishing to know how I liked the garden, the flowers, &c. Observing a pocket album in my hand, she asked what I had hoarded up there—some worldly goods? She took it, and examining it, desired to know if I wished to keep some money I had in it (fifteen dollars.) I replied no; as I was going to join them, I would entrust it to her care. She also requested me to sing one tune; I complied, and sung,

Mrs. G.'s advice, after hearing Romish preaching and reading their books, I went to board at Mrs. H.'s, opposite the Catholic church, where I employed my time in ornamental work, visited the Convent often, and informed myself as much as possible of a recluse's life; lived as retired as the "Charity Sisters," except visiting some of my relatives three times, twice accompanied with Romish friends.

* Mrs. Mary Ursula came from New Hampshire, and was received as *Choir Religieuse.* She was the eldest in the community; this I learned from the Superior, who often reprimanded her for saying many words in an uncouth rustic manner, (such as *daoun* for *down*, &c.,) telling her of her ignorance, &c. She never refused complying with the rules, but, when reprimanded, would kneel at once, and kiss the floor. I often wished to ask if she was happy, but dared not speak (without permission) to her. Their proceedings appeared so strange, that I was in continual fear. The novices frequently trembled when approaching "the Mother," particularly at confession.

"There's nothing true but Heaven." Her observation was, she should wish me to commence immediately with music. I then left the convent, and attended the sacraments of Confession and Communion; and on Sabbath morning, August 7, 1831, I was attended to the gate of the convent by my friend Mrs. G. I was shown into the public parlour by the lay sister, and was requested to kneel and continue my devotion until the Superior made her appearance. She soon came, and made a sign for me to follow her. She led the way into a long room, darkened, at one end of which stood a large crucifix, made of bone, which I was afterwards informed was made of the bones of saints. The Superior told me, in a whisper, it was the time of silence. But after arranging my dress, she took from her toilet a religious garb, which she placed upon my head, and bade me kiss it, saying it had been blessed by the Bishop. She then pronounced a short Latin prayer, while I was kneeling, at the same time giving me her blessing. After this, she conducted me into another apartment, where was a stranger whom she called a Postulant,* and giving me permission to speak, she left the room. A lay sister then entered the room with refreshment, after partaking which, we had permission to walk in one particular path in the garden. This stranger picked up a pear and began to eat it, and invited me to do the same, which I declined, being acquainted with the rules of the convent, which were very strict, as will be learned in the course of the narrative. She did not regard the rules so strictly as the Superior required, who, being made acquainted with her conversation by separately questioning us, sent her away, as she said, to another order;† but I now know that this was not the case.

To return to our walk in the garden. The bell rang, when we were immediately conducted to the Religieuse Choir; and here the Superior caused me to kneel three times, before I could suit her. After the performances were over, which consisted of the office of adoration to the Blessed Virgin, and prayers to the saints, repeated in the Latin tongue, of which I knew nothing, we proceeded to the refectory, where we partook of our "portions." After saying Latin, we kneeled and kissed the floor, at a signal given by the Superior on her snuff-box. Before eating, one of the Religieuses said, "In nomine Domni nostri Jesu Christi,"* all making the sign of the cross, and responding, "Amen." After receiving our portions we performed several devotions, such as kissing the floor and repeating Latin, while the "Angelus" was ringing. We then went immediately to the "Community." On entering this room, the "novices" kneel and repeat the "Ave Maria,"† kiss the floor, and seat themselves for recreation, according to the rules given by the Superior, entitled, "Rules by the Reverend Mother." The following are the rules, which were enclosed in a gilt frame and suspended in the community; and it is the duty of every novice to read them at least once a-week:

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* Candidate for a recluse.

† I believed she had gone to another order, and after returning to my sisters, told them so (together with my pastor,) that she was with the Sisters of Charity; when, to my surprise, she called upon me, said she had never thought of going to another order, and that the Superior had not done by her as she agreed.

1. To rise on the appearance of the Superior.

2. When reprimanded, to kneel at once and kiss the floor, until the signal be given to rise.

3. When speaking *of* the Superior, to say our Mother; when speaking *to* her, and to the professed Choir Religieuse, Mamère; to say Sister, when speaking *to* the Novices; *of* them, Miss; and *of* the professed Choir, Mrs.; to say *our* or *ours*, instead of *my* or *mine*.

4. To say "Ave Maria" every time we enter the community.

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* In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. When opportunity offered, I asked the Superior to explain the meaning. She said, in a very solemn manner, "You must not, my dear sister, give way to *curiosity*. Do you not recollect it is against the rules for a Religieuse to do so?" I answered, "Yes, Mamère!" and complied at once (by kissing the floor,) when she observed; "A Religieuse should never have a will of her own; as she grew in perfection in the order, she would understand what these words mean; it will be revealed to you when you are deserving." She taught me to believe that the "Office of the Blessed Virgin," (which was in Latin, and which we all repeated without understanding it,) was none other than that chanted in heaven by the saints around the throne of the Almighty, and called the sweet communion of "All Saints."

† Hail Mary.

5. Before entering any room, to give *three* knocks on the door, accompanied by some religious ejaculation, and wait until they are answered by three from within.

6. Not to lift our eyes while walking in the passage ways; also, never to *touch* each other's hands.

7. To stand while spoken to by the Bishop or Superior, and kneel while speaking to them; to speak in a particular tone.

8. If necessary to speak to the Superior during a time of silence, to approach her kneeling, and speak in whispers.

9. Never to leave a room without permission, giving at the same time our reason.

10. To rise and say the "Hour"* every time the clock strikes, except when the Bishop is present, who, if he wishes makes the signal.

The following are the written "*Rules and Penances of our Holy Father, Saint Augustine*," together with those of Saint Ursula, as near as I can recollect. They are read at the refectory table every week:—

1. To kneel in the presence of the Bishop, until his signal to rise.

2. Never to gratify our appetities, except with his holiness the Bishop's or a Father Confessor's permission.

3. Never to approach or look out of the window of the Monastery.

4. To sprinkle our couches every night with holy water.

5. Not to make a noise in walking over the Monastery.

6. To wear sandals and haircloth; to inflict punishment upon ourselves with our girdles, in imitation of a Saint.

7. To sleep on a hard matress or couch, with *one* coverlet.

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* "*The Hour.*—A sacred heart of Jesus! always united to the will of thy Father, grant that ours may be sweetly united in thine. Heart of Mary! an asylum in the land of our captivity, procure for us the happy liberty of the children of Jesus. May the souls of the faithful departed, through the merits of Christ and mercies of God, rest in peace. Amen."

The above is what is called *an Hour;* there is a different, though similar one, for each of the twenty-four hours in the day. They are written, and placed in two gilt frames over the mantel-piece; twelve over the heart of Mary in one, and twelve over the heart of Jesus in the other. Every time the clock strikes, the one whose turn it is to lecture rises and says one of them.

8. To walk with pebbles in our shoes, or walk kneeling until a wound is produced. Never to *touch any thing* without permission.

9. Never to gratify our curiousity, or exercise our thoughts on any subject, without our spiritual director's knowledge and advice. Never to desire food or water between portions.

10. Every time, on leaving the community, to take holy water from the altar of the Blessed Virgin, and make the sign of the cross.

11. If a *Religieuse* persist in disobeying the Superior, she is to be brought before the Bishop of the diocese, and punished as he shall think proper. Never to smile except at recreation, nor even then contrary to religious decorum.

12. Should the honoured Mother, the Superior, detect a *Religieuse* whose mind is occupied with worldly thoughts, or who is negligent in observing the rules of the Monastery, which are requisite and necessary to her perseverance and perfection in a religious life, she should immediately cause her to retire to her cell, where she could enter into a retreat.

I shall now continue my narrative of the remainder of the first day. At recreation, the Postulant and I had permission to embrace, in a new form, the *Religieuse.* After that, they congratulated me on my success, saying they had ever prayed for me since they had heard of my vocation. The evening bell for the Latin office now rang, and we assembled at the choir, where we performed such ceremonies as I before named, until the time of retiring. As we were strangers, the Superior conducted us to the infirmary, where other Novices were preparing to retire, and before leaving it, bade us not to rise until we had orders. Next morning being holy-day morning, the bell rang at three, instead of four, as it usually does, for meditation in the choir. While the *Angelus** was ringing, at five A.M. we were called to attend Complin and Prime, until half-past six; then Litany to the Saints. After Litany, the bell rang for diet in the refectory, every morning, except Friday; on which day we assembled for confession to the Superior.

The manner of confession to the Superior is as follows:—

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* The Angelus is the bell rung while repeating the three salutations and three Hail Marys.

The room is first darkened, and one lighted wax taper placed upon the Superior's throne; and she is considered as filling the place or station of the Blessed Virgin. After taking their places in the greatest order and silence, the Religieuses respond. Then the lecturess reads from a book, called Rules for the Ursuline Order, by Saint Ursula, about complaining of the cold, our clothing, food, &c. &c. They sit on their feet during the reading, a posture *extremely painful.* The reading finished, the Superior whispers to the sisters to approach her separately, which they do: each one in her turn approaches, and repeats the following: "Our Mother, we acknowledge that we have been guilty of breaking the rules of our *Holy Order*, by lifting our eyes while walking in the passage-ways; in neglecting to take holy water on entering the community and choir; failing in respect to our Superior, and veneration to our Father; failing in religious decorum, and in respect to our vows—poverty and obedience; for which we most humbly ask pardon of God, penance and forgiveness of you, our Holy Mother." As each one finishes, the "Holy Mother" gives her advice and penances, and her blessing; they then kiss her feet and sometimes make the cross with their tongues on the floor; then making their inclination, they retire to the choir to perform the penances.

After they are all assembled in the choir, the Superior says, *Kyrie eleison*, and they all answer, *Kyrie eleison;* the Superior says, *Christe eleison*, and they answer, *Christe eleison*, &c. &c. She then says Litany to the Saints in Latin, beginning with "Sancta Maria," and they respond, "Ora pro nobis," &c. &c. This ceremony is very solemn. It is performed until eight o'clock A.M., when we receive our portion sitting on the floor. The bell rings at half-past eight for young ladies' recreation. Then we attend to study until a quarter before eleven; then private lecture until eleven; then bell rings for the examination of conscience till a quarter past eleven; then for diet. The services at diet* are, after repeating Latin:—first, they seat themselves in order upon a bench, first crossing themselves in their appointed places, on one side of a long narrow table; before each one lies a small linen napkin or servet, rolled round another small cloth, containing a knife and fork; beside each servet is a plate containing the "portion;" then the Superior enters and passes along to her table, at the head of the room, the Nuns making their inclinations as she passes. She then makes a signal on her snuff-box, and the "Religieuse," whose turn it is to speak, says, "*Benedicite*;" the Superior answers, "*Benedicite*;" and so it continues, in a similar manner, from one to the other, the "Efficient"* repeating a Latin prayer. The Superior then makes the signal for the lecturess to read from the Lives of the Saints and Martyrs, while the others are eating. When the signal is given, each one rolls up the knife and fork in the napkin, and lays it as she found it—(they also open it at a signal;) and the one whose turn it is to do so, after kissing the floor, as a token of humility, takes from the drawer a white apron and a basket containing a napkin, and after putting on the apron, brushes the fragments from the tables into the basket, and takes the servets, making her inclination to each one. She then takes the articles off the Superior's table, one by one, in a napkin, in a solemn manner. If any eatables fall on the floor, they must be taken up in a napkin, and not by any means with the bare hands.

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* Our diet consisted of the plainest kind of food, principally vegetables and vegetable soups, Indian puddings, and very seldom meat. Our tea was made of herbs, sometimes of the bitter kind. We partook of this diet in imitation of the Holy Fathers of the Desert, to mortify our appetites. Pumpkins, stewed with molasses and water, served us sometimes as a

After this, the Superior makes a signal, and the lecturess and before-mentioned *religieuse* kneel in the middle of the floor and

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dessert. Occasionally we had mouldly bread to eat. A very insignificant piece of butter was sometimes placed on our plates. The Superior's diet was far better than ours: sometimes it was sumptuous, wine not excepted. I ascertained this, as I occasionally, in turn, went round to gather the fragments. She sent me, on two occasions, some apple-parings to eat, as a part of my portion. Sometimes the Religieuses deny themselves any diet; prostrate, kiss the feet of these who remain at table, performing various kinds of penance, while the others are eating and listening to the reading. Those who have permission to deny themselves in the morning, take their work-baskets as they pass to the refectory, where they sew by candle-light, as the lecturess is reading. This has a solemn and impressive appearance.

* The Efficient is one who repeats prayers, officiates during the office, and serves at Mass.

kiss it, and immediately rise and join the others in repeating the Latin prayers; after which the lecturess rings the Angelus. During this ringing, they all kneel and repeat it, then assemble in the community for "recreation." During this they are permitted to converse with one another, but in a particular and low tone, and only on such subjects as the Superior shall give them. If she be absent, the conversation is usually on the subject last read at the table; and they work during the time.

After recreation, public* lectures take place, and at one o'clock the bell rings for "visitation" to the altar, which, with the Vespers, occupy us an hour and a half. Then the Rosary is said. On hearing the bell again, we all assemble in the community, where there is a "point of prayer" read. Then lessons occupy us until five; meditation and reflection half an hour longer; then the bell rings again for diet, where we go through the observances before named; then recreation forty-five minutes; then the *Miserere*, during which the bell rings; then public prayers in the choir; then the *Benedictus* rings, and the lay sisters† come up into the choir. Matins, lauds, and prayers continue from seven until nine o'clock, when we retire while the bell is ringing, except those who attend lessons and penances. This concludes a day and its services. The same course was pursued every day, except Fridays and Sundays, when there was some variation.

I had become in about a week, apparently so great a favourite of the Superior, that although remiss in duties, it was in a measure overlooked. She would even reprimand the religieuses for my example and my faults, one instance of which I will give. Failing to arrange the Superior's toilet, and seat, and cricket, it being my turn, one of the religieuses was reprimanded in my stead, and immediately knelt and kissed the floor. After this I was sent for to the Bishop's room, where the young ladies assemble on mass morning, and after kneeling, &c., the Superior asked me how things appeared; if they appeared as I thought they would; if I liked my food, &c. Feeling a repugnance to answer her, she said, "Recollect yourself." I told her I liked all pretty well, except my couch. She left, telling me to beg the intercession of St. Teresa. The next day my couch was exchanged for a better, and the image of St. Teresa put near it for my use.

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* Public Lecture means a subject read aloud by the lecturess.

† One lay sister remains kneeling in the entry until we get to the psalm called Te Deum, when she rings while we are saying it. The Religieuses bow or kneel, &c., but do not join in saying the office.

Soon after I became an inmate of the convent, the Bishop came into the community and said, "How does that little nun? And what have you done with sister Stimson?" The Superior answered, that she was not fit for the order, and she had sent her to the Sisters of Charity. (See note on page 210.) He then addressing me, asked how I liked Mount Benedict. I said, "Very well, my Lord." He then said, "O, but you will have to strive with the temptations between the good and evil spirits;" and he then explained all the horrors of Satan, and asked me where St. Teresa my namesake was, and if I had read her life; and told me to say, as she did, these words:—"Now come, all of you; I, being a true servant of God, will see what you can do against me," by way of challenge to the evil ones, and beg her intercession. He told me my sister had been to see if I had taken the veil, or had any thought of taking it; and he said I might rest contented, as my friends would trouble me no more.* He then told me the difference between a holy life and a worldly life; said the devil would assail me as he did St. Teresa, and make me think I ought to go back to the world, and make me offers of worldly pleasures, and promise me happiness. In order to prevent this, I must watch and pray all the time, and banish worldly thoughts entirely from my mind, and throw holy water at the evil spirits, and challenge them to come if they dare. Perceiving the unpleasant effect this had on my feelings, he portrayed in lively colours the happiness which would flow from my resisting the evil spirits, and what a crown of glory would be placed upon my head by the angels,

According to my confessor's orders, I took upon myself many austere penances, &c.; but the Superior noticing my exhaustion from this cause, released me from my austerities for a time, saying, I was a favoured one; and she gave me permission to rest while the others rose to say *midnight matins*† and hear mass. On the exaltation of the holy cross, the Bishop gave us his blessing, we all kneeling in the community. In conversation with the sisters, he remarked one had not a very pleasant countenance; and he asked me how I was pleased with my teacher, saying, he hoped she put a more pleasant countenance on while instructing me.

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* I have since learned it was my sister and another lady. They say he told them I had not taken the veil, but hoped I soon would do.

† Midnight mass and midnight matins are said at night during Lent,

Once, while walking with the Bishop and Superior, we met a stranger, upon which the Superior required us to turn our backs while she conversed with him. After he left the garden, the Bishop and Superior held some conversation together apart from us, of which I overheard the following words of the Bishop:—"I fear he did not come here accidentally, as he stated, but for some particular purpose." Immediately the Mother-assistant came to me, saying, that gentleman looked very much like me, and asked me if he was not my brother; and having permission to look, I answered, "No, he is not." We then retired within the convent. The Bishop observed to me, just before we went in, that that gentleman looked no more like me than one of the dogs of the convent.

I was particularly hurt in witnessing the austerities put on a religieuse, named sister Mary Magdalene, who came from Ireland. Once, while reciting the office, she, by accident, or losing breath, spoke in a lower key than she should. At a signal from the Superior, she fell prostrate before her desk, and remained so for one hour, until the office was finished, when she had permission to rise. This was the first time I thought the Superior had done wrong.* Soon after this, in private confession to the Superior, she appeared determined to know my thoughts, and put many questions to me that were hard to answer. I would here remark, that this is the practice at auricular confessions. She told me to beg the intercession of my patron saint, of the Blessed Virgin, and Saint Ursula. I complained to her of my strength's failing, and of my diet not being such as I was used to. She replied, that a religieuse should

and midnight mass always on Christmas. This is a time of special humiliation and prayer.

* The Superior often made mistakes in repeating the office, by endeavouring to repeat it without the book. And I learned afterwards from Mary Frances, that the Superior did not understand it.

have no *choice*, and that I should have left my feelings in the world; and she immediately imposed the following penances:—to make the sign of the cross on the floor with my tongue, and to eat a crust of bread in the morning for my portion. The first of these penances I did not fulfil to the letter, making the sign of the cross with my hand instead of my tongue.*

After this, a daughter of my friend Mrs. G. came to the convent, and was permitted to spend some time with me in private. I also had some trifles given me as presents from this little girl, and leave to send what word I wished to my friends. This girl told me at the time, she was coming there to school soon; I therefore sent by her my love to my friends, informing them that I liked the convent very well, and should be very happy to see them, if they would not speak against my religion.†

Some preparations were made for my taking the *vows* of a Religieuse, a Novena (nine days' devotion) being said for me, and for my perfection in a religious life, and prayers for the conversion of my friends. About this time my sponsor, the priest, visited the convent, and talked, as I then thought, like a godlike person. My reception was to take place privately, because we wished to keep my father ignorant of the manner in which I had been received, and because he might hear of it, should it take place publicly; as he before said, I was not eighteen, and he could prevent my going there. They said he could not prevent me, as I was now of age. I was perfectly happy at this time, and presented the Superior with some lines of poetry, which gave her proof of my sincerity and contentment.

She appeared very much pleased with the verses, embraced me very affectionately, and expressed her hearty approbation of my perseverance in performing the duties of the order, and said the request for her entreaties that I might persevere in a religious life should be granted, and she would show the lines to the Bishop. She accordingly did so, when he was present one day, and he said he must write my conversion, for it was so much like St. Teresa's, my namesake. After this she gave orders to have all my worldly dresses, being ten in number, and other articles of wearing apparel, altered for those young ladies whom she clothed and educated; and for me she ordered a long habit to be prepared, which was to be blessed by the Bishop ; also a veil which they said denoted purity and innocence.

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* I would state to the reader, that those things were received on my part with great repugnance; but the Superior said they were to prove my vocation, and I submitted without a murmur.

† This message my friends never received, as I have since learned. I was deceived in regard to the friendship of Mrs. G.

One time I failed in rising at the Angelus,* which was not noticed by the Superior. The next morning a Religieuse did not rise until the ringing of the Angelus, and when she came into the refectory we were at diet. She brought her pillow, and kneeling, kissed it, and said as follows:—"I have neglected to obey the commands of the Superior, and have not risen until the Angelus, which I am most heartily sorry for; and I humbly ask pardon of God, and penances of you, our holy Mother." The Superior said no one who disobeyed her commands should be permitted to remain in this monastery. Her penance was to kiss the floor, and remain kneeling until lecture and diet were over.

The Bishop, about this time, came to examine our work, &c. After hearing us sing, he complimented us; said he should hardly have thought that I could have learned of heretics to sing and work so well; and desired me to learn him to work lace, as he feared I should not finish his robe for Christmas. After being presented, as usual, with wine, he retired. The Bishop's wine is presented in a golden cup. The religieuse who presents it remains kneeling until he has drunk it.

As was usual on Saturday evening, after signifying our obedience to the Superior, by prostrating and kissing the floor, we received permission to visit the "*sanctum sanctorum*" on Sabbath morning, to receive the Eucharist, all of us except my teacher (the one whom the Bishop said did not look pleasant, and whom I saw in tears on Sunday morning.) The Superior made a signal for me to follow her into the Bishop's room, when, first inquiring into my feelings, as she usually did, she asked me what I thought of my teacher; if she had put any questions to me while at my lessons, and how long before I thought I should be able to pronounce my vows, and take charge of a class in music. She asked me, at another time, what I thought was the reason of my teacher's crying—(her name was Miss Mary Francis.) I replied, I did not know. She said it was the operation of the Holy Spirit, and her devotional feelings were very deep.

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* My time was to rise at the Angelus, which was rung at five, while the Religieuses rose at four, except on holy-day mornings, when they rose at three.

The next day, while we were at our recreations, Miss Mary Francis appeared in great distress from some cause, and in tears. She soon after pencilled a few lines, and approached the Superior kneeling, &c., and presenting the paper. She appeared confused and very angry, and bade her take a seat. After this, the Superior thought it necessary for me to retire to the infirmary and take an emetic, which I did the next day. The day after this I had orders to take medicine, which I was averse to; and on my declining, the Infirmarian* made the sign of the cross a number of times, and told me it was the Superior's orders, and I could not avoid taking a part of it. I remained in the infirmary two days without a fire, and the weather was very cold. I had then permission to go to the choir, where I immediately fainted, at which the Superior was angry, and said in a whisper, she had told me that *I ought not to have any feelings.*

For a while, sister Mary Francis was not present at the office and recreations as usual, and the Superior gave as a reason for her absence, that she was ill. But it will be necessary for me to leave for a moment Miss Mary Francis, and speak of Miss Mary Magdalene. The latter was put over me as a teacher, in the room of Mary Francis, whom I then supposed to be sick; but I afterwards learned that she was confined, that she might have a better opportunity to clear herself of the temptations of Satan. Sister Mary Magdalene told me she was about to leave this world, and wished to give me some advice. She said she thought it was God's will to take her to himself. After reminding me of the respect due to the Superior, and of my negligence in not kissing the floor in the choir, and of my looking up while walking in the passages, she then spoke of sister Mary Francis; said she would soon be able to give me lessons as before; but wished to know which of the novices I thought had the best vocation for a religious life, and which one would be most likely to return to the world. To the latter I replied, "Sister Mary Francis." She asked why. I said she did not appear to observe the rules so strictly as the others. She asked me if that would be any inducement for me. I replied, "No, not *that.*" She appeared unable to talk, but notwithstanding her weak state and trembling hands, she sewed all the time. I told her it gave me pain to see her distress herdistress herself so. With a peculiar emphasis she said, "Sister, *obedience!*" and in a very affecting manner made the sign of the cross.

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* The Infirmarian is one who tends upon the sick. I was as well as usual when I took the emetic.

While at my lessons one day, in the hours of silence, the Superior and Mother-assistant came, wishing me to tell them where Miss Mary Francis was. I replied I had not seen her. They left the room, and soon Miss Mary Francis entered, in tears. The Superior followed, and seizing her by the arm, shook her violently, threatening to punish her for disobedience, and wished she had a *cell anstere enough* to put her in, and exclaimed, "Shame! Shame! you 'disedify' Miss Mary Agnes."* She then told her not to feign sickness again, but to show by her appetite her illness. After the penance of kissing the floor, &c., she gave her a number of prayers to copy for the Protestant scholars. And from that time we were watched with the strictest scrutiny. The next day the Superior gave me permission to write to my father. She said Miss Mary Francis was crazy, and she should not keep her in the convent more than a month longer, if she did not reform. Mary Francis' grief will be well recollected by those in the public apartments. The next day I wrote to my father. The letter† was corrected by Miss Mary Francis, who was not crazed, as stated by the Superior. I then whispered to her, (it being the time of silence,) and asked the cause of her grief. She wrote on a slate, "she could not." A religieuse was in the room, watching us very narrowly, and to mislead the religieuse, she reminded me of making false syntax. We next met in the community for recreation. The Superior gave the Mother-assistant permission to speak (Miss Mary Francis was absent.) She began by asking how she did. The Superior answered, "She goes on in her old way;" and observed that she was unfit for the order. The Mother-assistant said, "O, Mamère, let me pray, at least, a month longer for her;" and turning to the novices, asked them to join with her. The Superior granted her permission, but handed her a letter to read. The Mother-assistant, turning to us, said, "Sisters, pay attention. This letter is from Miss Mary Francis' aunt, Miss I. of New York." The substance of it was, that she had received her (the Superior's) letter, and was sorry to have recommended to her that person, but she thought she had reformed, and would be a suitable member for a monastery; and she begged pardon for introducing one to her who had disturbed the peace of her little community, and hoped, if it were possible, she would not long be troubled with her, &c. The Superior said, after the close of the letter, "Sisters, you may still continue to pray for her, and I will see about this thing, as it may be a temptation of the adversary." Two or three days after this, I met Miss Mary Francis at my lessons in the community, and again asked her to tell me her distress by writing on the slate, or I would tell the Superior I could not learn of her. She begged I would not, and told me she was under a solemn obligation not to make known the cause of her grief. She asked me if I was happy; I told her I was not, to see her unhappy, and again entreated her to tell me the cause of her tears. She said I must not tempt her to break her promise, for if we were detected in conversation, she would be made still more unhappy. I then asked, if she had recovered from her illness, why she did not go to her class, &c. She said the Superior had forbidden her, but she could not answer any other questions. I had formed a strong attachment for this lady, and it gave me pain to see her so distressed.

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* All the nuns have the name of Mary, and added to it is the name of some canonized saint. Miss Mary Agnes was my name.

† This letter was never received by my father.

At next recreation, the Superior sent us word to meet the Bishop in the meditation garden. Sister Mary Magdalene being too exhausted to walk as fast as we did, the Bishop asked who that was; and being told, he burst into a laugh, and said, "Sister Magdalene, when are you going to Heaven?" She replied, in a voice scarcely audible, "I have no will of my own, my Lord; whenever it shall please God to take me."* She thought she should not live to see Christmas. We then assembled in the community, and when all were seated, the Bishop inquired, "Where is that sober-faced nun?" Being told by the Mother-assistant that she was giving lessons to Miss F., he took the letter before spoken of, and looking it over, handed it to the Mother-assistant, saying, "Why do you keep her, and why does she not go to her class?" The Superior said the young ladies were not pleased with her as a teacher. He asked if all disliked her. Miss Mary Benedict replied, "No, my lord; some in the French class appear to like her." On which he said, "Show them that letter."

At my next lesson, I told Mary Francis, if she did not explain to me the cause of her grief, I should certainly tell the Superior; for I could receive no benefit from her instructions while she was so confused, and the Superior had reprimanded me for not learning my lessons; and I promised, if she would tell me, I would not inform the Superior. She replied that she could not answer me then, but would think of it, and give me an answer in the afternoon. Accordingly, in the afternoon, a religieuse being present, watching us, she communicated what I desired to know by writing on a slate,† and desired to know if I was happy. I answered, I did not like the Superior so well as formerly. She then wrote, that while at prayer and meditation, she concluded it was her duty, particularly as I was dissatisfied, to give me some advice, and considered her promise before made as not binding; and received from me a promise of secrecy, she proceeded to say that she hoped she should be pardoned if anything wrong was said by her, as my whole happiness depended on the words she should communicate. "I am," says she, "kept here by the Superior, through selfish motives, as a teacher, under a slavish fear and against my will. I have written several letters to my father, and have received no satisfactory answer; and I have for a long time felt dissatisfied with my situation. The Superior has failed in fulfilling her promise, not complying with the conditions on which I was received; which were, that as she was in need of a teacher, particularly in French and music, I might take the white veil, and leave whenever I chose; and my taking the veil, 'as it was only a custom,' should not compel me; and that my obligations should not be binding. My father thinks I can leave at any time, for I do not believe he has received my letters; and that letter you have heard read as Miss I.'s is a forged one." We were here interrupted by the entrance of the Superior, who made a sign for me to follow her into the Bishop's room. After asking me how I progressed in my lessons, and hearing me read in the "Novices' Directory,"* she observed that I looked melancholy, and commanded me to tell her the reason. I replied that I did not feel well, that my lungs were sore since taking the emetic,† &c. She said that was only a notion, and bade me tell the true reason without any more equivocation. My words were, I did not love her so well then as formerly. She exclaimed, "Oh my child, I admire you for your simplicity;" and asked me my reason for not loving her, which I declined giving. She commanded "*obedience*" with seeming mildness, and I told her that I thought she did not pay that attention to me she had promised, and that she was not so kind as formerly. She then said, a religieuse should have no will of her own; that their Superior put many things upon them, in order to try their vocation. She then recounted the sufferings of a certain saint, and bade me pray to that saint for protection; and showed me a phial, which she said contained some of Saint Teresa's tears; and said, if I would save my tears while in devotion, she could tell by them whether I should ever arrive to the perfection of a saint. She then gave me her blessing, and reminded me of my reception, which was soon to take place.

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* It is here to be understood, that sister Mary Magdalene was in a consumption, and had entered the convent nine months before in perfect health. She was worn out with austerities.

† We were at the piano; she pretended to write notes, &c.

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* This is a book which is used only in convents. It directs us to respect the Bishop as a representative of the person of Christ, and in confession as Christ himself; and the Superior as fulfilling the office of Mother of God.

† My lungs were also very sore in consequence of repeating the offices, so much so, that when present at recreation, when I had permission to speak, it gave me pain rather than pleasure. I have, since leaving the convent, consulted several physicians, who have expressed it as their opinion, that the cause of my bleeding at the lungs, which frequently occurs, was originally the repeating the office and other services, in *one long drawling tone*, which any one can know, by trying, to be very difficult.

At my lesson in the afternoon, I again conversed with Mary Francis concerning the letter, and requested her to inform me how my happiness was concerned. She said still that the letter read to the community was a forged one; that Mrs. I. was her aunt and sincere friend; and did her father know her sufferings, and the treatment she received from the Superior, he would prosecute her, that she feared the Superior as she did a serpent. She then advised me not to bind myself after my three months' "test" or trial,* to *that* order, by complying with the rules of "reception," any further than would leave me at liberty to go to another if I chose; and I must not think, because they were wicked, that the inmates of all convents were so. I assured her, that although I had thought that there were none good but Catholics, I now believed that there were good and bad among all sects. She then requested me not to betray her, and told me the Superior intended to keep her there for life, and she thought it her duty to warn me of the snares laid for her. She disliked that order,† and wished me to inform her why, and in what manner I had come there. I related to her then, and during the next afternoon, all the particulars. She appeared very much surprised to learn that my friends had been opposed to my coming, as the Superior had told her that they had put me there for life. She said she had been taken from the public apartment, because she had been seen weeping by the young ladies; that should the Superior refuse to let her go, she should, if possible, make her escape; and named a religieuse (Miss Mary Angela) who had made her escape before. She desired me, if she should be so fortunate as to make her escape, to ask, in private confession, permission to see my friends, and consult them about going to the "Sisters of Charity;" and if they were willing that I should go, she would procure me a situation, and by letter inform me of it. She was in great distress on account of that letter, which plainly unfolded the motives of the Superior. She said she should appear as calm as possible, as it was the only way to blind the eyes of the Superior, and enable her to escape; and requested me to give her all the information respecting the Superior's intention that I could learn, and to listen to her and to the Mother-assistant's conversation in recreation hours.

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* When persons first enter the convent, they take an obligation that they will spend the remainder of their days as a recluse, but they are put on a three months' "test," or trial, to see if they have a "vocation" for that particular order; if not, they are generally placed in another.

† Miss Mary Francis was educated, I believe, in the convent of Saint Joseph, Emmetsburg; also known as the order of the "Sisters of Charity." She possessed an amiable disposition and superior talents, and was universally admired by the inmates of the school; and so far as my acquaintance went, she was deserving the esteem of every one.

At recreation, the Superior observed that Miss Mary Francis had no vocation for a religious life, as she had refused to attend the offices and prayers. At our next interview, I inquired of Mary Francis if she had refused to attend prayers. She replied, no; that the Superior had discovered her intention to escape, and had forbidden her attending offices, communion, and confession, for exposing her feelings before the religieuse; and that the Superior had imposed penance upon her, forbidding her to walk in the garden during recreation; and that the presents given her by the young ladies had been, with the Superior's permission, taken by some one from her desk. She remarked, that we were exhorted to love and pray for those who spitefully use us, but she could not love the community generally, they exercised so much cruelty towards her; that the treatment she received was for no other reason than because she had given way to tears, which were a great relief to her. She was happy, she said, to find one who sympathized with her, and who would not treat her with contempt, as the others did. She said also, that the Superior had done wrong respecting her apparel.

I have now come to that part of my narrative in which I must again speak of the sufferings of Sister Magdalene. One day she came from the refectory, and being so much exhausted as to be hardly able to ascend the stairs, I offered to assist her, and the Superior reprimanded me for it, saying, her weakness was feigned, and that my pity was false pity. She then said to Sister Magdalene, after we were seated, in a tone of displeasure, if she did not make herself of use to the "community" she would send her back to Ireland. On which sister Mary Magdalene rose and said, "Mamère, I would like—"* The Superior cut short what she was going to say by stamping upon the floor; and, demanding who gave her permission to speak, imposed on her the penance of kissing the floor. The Superior, after this, imposed hardships which she was hardly able to sustain, frequently reminding her that she had but a short time to work out her salvation, and that she must do better if she did not wish to suffer in purgatory. The Superior questioned me about my feelings—wished to know why I looked so solemn. I told her I was ill from want of exercise, that I was not accustomed to their mode of living, &c. She said I must mention it to my confessor, which I did.

The next time the Bishop visited us, he was in unusually high spirits, and very sociable; and he related several stories, which are not worthy of notice in this place. He again asked sister Magdalene when she thought of going to that happy place to receive her crown of glory. She replied, "Before the celebration of our divine Redeemer's birth, my Lord." He said she ought to be very thankful that she was called so soon.

I will here relate a conversation of the Bishop with the Superior at recreation hour, respecting the Pope, &c. After talking a while in French, he said he had received a long letter from the Pope, in which his Holiness congratulated him on his success in establishing the true religion in the United States, and made him offers of money to advance the interest of the Catholic Church, and more firmly establish it in America, &c. The Bishop then spoke of the orthodox in Boston, and said Dr. B. had got himself into a "hornet's nest," from which he could not extricate himself. The Superior named a sermon delivered in the North Church by an Episcopalian, and said they must look out, or they would get themselves into a "hornet's nest." The Bishop mentioned a visit of Dr. O'F. at Dr. B.'s, and said Dr. O'F. had scarcely an opportunity to say a word, on account of the noise and crying of the children which were in the room, and with which Dr. B. was playing; said he appeared more engaged with the children than with the subjects of religion, &c., &c. Miss Mary John, the Mother-assistant, exclaimed, "Is it possible, my Lord, that a man of God is treated in such a way by heretics?" "Yes," said the Bishop; "none but he that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord; but he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife." The Superior said Dr. B. possessed very little sense, and had a weak mind. The Bishop said that the doctor, by the course he had taken, had made many converts to Catholicism; "and perhaps," said the Superior, "he is a wicked instrument in the hands of God to bring about good."

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* This, and other like half-uttered expressions, convinced me that she wished to return to her friends.

At another time, while walking on the convent grounds, a cannon ball was picked up by one of the religieuses, and the Bishop taking it observed, as he gave it to the Superior, "Here is a British ball, that has killed many a Yankee;" and he also made several other similar observations. At another time, the Superior told the Bishop that two ladies met near the convent; the words she used were: "One Yankee met another, and said, "I *guess* you are agoing to *independence*." "I *guess* I be," said the other. They then laughed heartily about it, and gave us permission to hold our recreation upon it. The Bishop remarked the Yankees celebrated independence-day in honour of *men*, and *appointed* days of thanksgiving, instead of celebrating the birthday of the Redeemer, in honour of God, &c.*

When I was again summoned to the Superior, she inquired, as usual, into the state of my feelings; and when I said I desired to see my friends, she replied, "Why, my dear Agnes, do you wish to see worldly friends? Who do you call your friends? Am not I your friend? Is not the Bishop your friend? If your worldly friends wished to see you, would they not come and see you?" I replied "Yes." A few days after this I was taken very ill, and went to the infirmary. Miss Mary Francis, hearing of my illness, made an errand to come to the infirmary for some thread to mend her apparel, and pretending not to find it, asked me where the religieuse put it, and desired to know if I had any good news for her. I told her I had not; but as we had permission to assemble for recreation in the afternoon, I would, if I heard any, then inform her. At that instant a novice opened the door, and Miss Mary Francis excused herself by pretending that she was looking for the basket of thread. We were not so strictly watched for a few days as we had been; but when Miss Mary Francis exposed her feelings one day before Miss Mary Magdalene and myself, we were again closely watched. I then asked the Superior's permission to write to my friends, and desire them to come and see me, which she granted; and also told me to write what I pleased. I prepared a letter accordingly to my sister, stating that I did not wish to return to the world, but was anxious for a visit from them.

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* We all had permission at one time to walk with the Superior in the meditation garden. The Superior heard a noise behind the fence, and sent her servants to learn the cause; they returned, informing her that two men were looking through the fence. The Superior remarked, the Bishop had said there was great danger to be apprehended from such persons; that if Protestants were to offer any violence to them, the judgments of heaven would fall upon the wicked; and God had founded them upon a rock so firm that it could not fall. The Superior gave orders to the porters not to allow strangers to walk over the grounds without her or the Bishop's permission.

I began now to be much dissatisfied with this convent. My views of retirement, however, were the same as ever, and I thought I would go to the order of the Sisters of Charity, where Miss Mary Francis was educated, as she had promised to introduce me there. She told me, that should I be called to the public apartments, as an assistant in ornamental work, if possible, to slip a billet into Miss I.'s hand (a scholar from New York,) who would convey it to her ; and I must not open my mind to my confessor until I was sure she had left the community. I asked her if she would take a letter for me into the world; she replied, she dare not, as the Superior would examine her, and not permit any thing to be carried from the convent into the world. We then laid the following plan, to mislead the Superior in regard to our intentions. Miss Mary Francis was to complain to the Superior that I would not give proper attention when at my lessons, and I was to tell her that I could not receive my benefit from Miss Mary Francis, on account of her grief and absence of mind. This we fulfilled to the letter. We also agreed on a signal, by which I should know whether she was going with or without permission. If she went without permission, she was to tie a string around an old book, as if to keep the leaves together, and lay it upon the writing desk; if with permission, she was to make the sign of the cross three times upon her lips. I had intimated my desire to go with her; but she said it would be more prudent for me to endeavour to obtain, the Superior's permission to see some of my friends, and I could then consult with them, and arrange matters to suit me. After our conversation, she knelt at the altar of the Blessed Virgin, and begged God to forgive us if we acted wrong in this matter; if the Superior can be so wicked as to approach the holy of holies and yet receive absolution?" She then selected from a book the letters forming her real name, that I might write to her, should I not get an opportunity to give a letter to Miss I. A religieuse entered, and whispered her to come away, and I never saw her afterwards.

When the Bishop next visited the "community," he said he understood that they were rid of that person who had caused them so much trouble. They all then rejoiced because Miss Mary Francis had gone. The Bishop asked whither they had sent her. They answered, "to her friends." Nothing more at that time was said about it.

Not long after this, at private confession, I was questioned very particularly in regard to my views of remaining there for life. I told my confessor that I was convinced that order was too austere for me, and immediately burst into tears. He endeavoured to comfort me by saying I was not bound to that order for life; I could go to another order. I asked him if I might see my friends. He answered, "Yes." After receiving a promise from him that I should go to any other order I chose, I consented to take the vows. He gave me to understand, that I need take no other vows than I should at the convent of the Sisters of Charity. My reception took place the next day. I refused the white veil, because the Sisters of Charity did not wear it, and it was omitted. The choir was first darkened, and then lighted with wax tapers. The ceremony commenced with chants, prayers, responses, &c. A book was placed in my hands, which contained the vows I was to take. As near as I can recollect, the following is the substance of them.

"O, Almighty and Everlasting God, permit me, a worm of the dust, to consecrate myself more strictly to thee this day, in presence of the most Holy Mother and Saint Ursula, and all of thy saints and martyrs, by living *two years a recluse*, and by instructing young ladies after the manner of Saint Ursula, and by taking upon myself her most holy vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, which, with thy grace and assistance, I will fulfil."

They all responded "Amen," and repeated a long office in Latin. I still continued to wear the black garb,* which the Bishop blessed; also a long habit and a string of Rosary beads, which were also blessed by the Bishop. He wished to know one day, how Miss Mary Agnes did, after taking the white vows; to which the Superior replied, "Very well." He then conversed about the establishment in Boston, and said that some Sisters of Charity were coming to constitute a convent either there or at Mount Benedict lower establishment.†

Meanwhile, Sister Mary Magdalene was employed in the refectory. According to the Bishop, she was a saint, and he said there was a saint's body in the tomb (one of the late sisters) which remained undecayed. I heard the Superior, about this time, tell Miss Mary Magdalene to burn all her treasures,‡ or she would suffer in purgatory for her self love, and she was afraid she did not suffer patiently, for she appeared romantic. Mary Magdalene fell prostrate at the Superior's feet, and said she would fulfil any command that should be laid upon her. The Superior gave her a penance, to kiss the feet of all the religieuses, and asked them to say an Ave and a Pater for her; after which, she lay prostrate in the refectory until the Angelus rung. One communion morning, as I rose and was dressing, I took some water as usual to rinse my mouth, and all at once Mary Magdalene appeared greatly agitated, and even in agony; made signs and crosses to signify that I should commit a sacrilege were I then to approach the communion; and I then recollected that nothing must be taken into the mouth on the morning before this sacrament. I relate this to show the state of her mind. The Superior one day requested the Mother-assistant to get the keys of the tomb, and to have a good place prepared for Mary Magdalene, who forced a smile, saying, she should prefer hers near the undecayed saint's bed.

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* The apparel of a religieuse is always kissed by the wearer, every time of putting on and taking off.

† The Bishop, in confession, told me I could, if I preferred it, become one of these sisters.

‡ The treasures consisted of written prayers, books, papers, a lock of her mother's hair, &c., which she brought from Ireland, and kept in her desk.

As time passed on, the Superior became more severe in her treatment, because I objected to pursue my music. My mind had been in such an unhappy state, that I for a long time found it impossible to study; and further, I did not wish to receive instruction, for I had determined not to stay there. I therefore succeeded in obtaining the Superior's permission to occupy my time chiefly with the needle, and assured her that I would again study when I felt better.

On one of the holy-days the Bishop came in, and after playing upon his flute, addressed the Superior, styling her mademoiselle, and wished to know if Mary Magdalene wanted to go to her long home. The Superior beckoned to her to come to them, and she approached on her knees. The Bishop asked her if she felt prepared to die. She replied, "Yes, my Lord; but, with the permission of our Mother, I have one request to make." They told her to say on. She said she wished to be anointed before death, if his Lordship thought her worthy of so great a favour. He said, "Before I grant your request, I have one to make; that is, that you will implore the Almighty to send down from heaven a bushel of gold, for the purpose of establishing a college for young men on Bunker Hill.'' He said he had bought the land for that use, and that all the sisters who had died had promised to present his request, but had not fulfilled their obligations; "and," says he, "you must shake hands in heaven with all the sisters who have gone, and be sure and ask them why they have not fulfilled their promise, for I have waited long enough; and continue to chant your office with us while here on earth, which is the sweet communion of saints.'' After she had given her pledge, and kissed his feet, he told the several members of the community to think of what they should like best. I was first called to make my request. I had never seen anything of this kind before, and my feelings were such as I cannot describe; and continuing silent, the Superior bade me name it. I then said I lacked humility, and should wish for that virtue. The religieuses then made their requests; one asked for grace to fulfil the vow of poverty; another, for obedience; a third, more fervent love for the Mother of God; a fourth, more devotion to her patron saint; a fifth, more devotion in approaching the altar and host, and so on. The Superior ended it by making the same request as the Bishop, adding, the purpose intended was that the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour might be more extensively propagated, and all dissenters might be made to turn to the true church, and believe. The conversation then turned upon the Pope, and the Bishop said the Pope would perhaps, before long, visit this country; and when things were more improved, and his new church finished, he should write to the Pope, &c. He went into a relation of some parts of ecclesiastical history; spoke of the Pope's being the Vicegerent of Christ on earth; and that although the wicked one prevailed now, it was designed for good, and the time would come when all would look to the Pope as their Spiritual dictator on earth. He thought that America rightfully belonged to the Pope, and that his Holiness would take up his residence here at some future day.

Not long after this, Mary Magdalene was anointed for death, and took her vows for life, but she continued to wear the white veil. I thought it singular that Mary Magdalene should at that time take her black vows, as they called them, because, as I learned in the community, she had not been there a year; and her wearing the white veil after taking them, appeared still more singular.

I will endeavour to give some idea of the manner in which she took her vows, and of the anointing. After she had retired to her couch,* the religieuses walked to the room in procession. Sister St. Clair held a wax taper blazing at her feet, and the Superior knelt at her head with the vows, which were copied on a half-sheet of paper. The Bishop then came in with both sacraments, all of us prostrating as he passed. After putting the tabernacle upon the little altar, which had been placed there for the purpose, he read from a book a great many prayers, all of us responding. He asked her a number of questions about renouncing the world, which she answered. The Superior gave her the vows, and after pronouncing them, she was anointed; sister St. Clare laying bare her neck and feet, which the Bishop crossed with holy oil, at the same time repeating Latin. He then gave her the *viaticum*, and ended the ceremony as he commenced, with saying mass, and passed out, we all prostrating.

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* I learned that the usual custom was to place them in a black coffin, covered with a black pall, when they were to take the black vows; but in this instance it was omitted.

She lived rather longer than was expected, but her penances were not remitted. She would frequently kneel and prostrate all night long in the cold infirmary, saying her rosary and other penances, one or two of which I will mention. She wore next her heart a metallic plate, in imitation of a crown of thorns, from which I was given to understand she suffered a sort of martyrdom. This I often saw her kiss, and lay on the altar of the crucifix as she retired. Another penance was, the reclining upon a mattress more like a table than a bed.

A day or two after this, the Superior, Mother-assistant, and Mary Benedict, ridiculed the appearance of Mary Magdalene, because of the dropsy, which prevented her appearing graceful, and because she was disappointed in not going to heaven sooner. The Superior gave her some linen capes to make, and said, "Do you think you shall stay with us long enough to do these, sister?" She took them, and said, "Yes, Mamére, I thank you."* Notwithstanding the Superior's severity, she sometimes appeared affectionate. One day I failed in ringing the observances at the usual time. I met the Superior, and fearing she would punish me, I burst into tears. She embraced me very affectionately, and wiped my face with a handkerchief, and said I should not be punished that time. She once told me I might sit at meditation hour, instead of kneeling, as it was very tiresome. She frequently called me *her holy innocent*, because she said I kept the rules of the order, and was preserving in my vocation as a recluse. She said I should see my friend Mrs. G. before long; but I did not see her while I was there.

While in the convent, I asked once or twice for a Bible, but never received any, and never saw one while there. The Bishop often said that the laity were not qualified to expound the scriptures, and that the successors of the apostles *alone* were authorized to interpret them, &c.

The Bishop, in one of his visits, spoke particularly of the cholera. He told us we must watch and pray more fervently or "the old Scratch would snatch us off with the cholera." It was recreation hour, but Mary Magdalene was at work in the refectory. When she came to the community, she appeared like a person in spasms; she tried to say "Ave Maria," and immediately fainted. We were all very much alarmed. At that moment the bell called us to the choir for visitation and vespers. When I retired, I felt much hurt to see Mary Magdalene in the cold infirmary, but did not dare to express my feelings. Next day, at recreation, the Superior, Mother-assistant, and Mrs. Mary Benedict, made a short visit to Mary Magdalene, and on returning they told us she was better, and in a spiritual sense well; for she had refused taking her portion, or anything eatable, as she did not wish to nourish her body, because the will of God had been made known to her in a vision. We all had the promise of conversing with her, but we were so constantly employed in our various offices, that we had no leisure.

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* She would often ask permission to take a little water, she was very thirsty; the Superior always refused it; but still the *obedient* Magdalene replied, "Mamére, I thank you."

The next day, it being my turn to see that all the vessels which contained holy water were filled, &c. I had an opportunity of looking at Mary Magdalene. Her eyes were partly open, and her face very purple; she lay pretty still. I did not dare to speak to her, supposing she would think it a duty to tell of it, as it would be an infraction of the rules. The next night I lay thinking of her, when I was suddenly startled, hearing a rattling noise, as I thought, in her throat. Very soon sister Martha (the sick lay nun) arose, and coming to her said, "Jesus! Mary! Joseph! receive her soul!" and rang the bell three* times. The spirit of the gentle Magdalene had departed. The Superior came, bringing a lighted wax-taper, which she placed in the hand of the deceased. She closed the eyes, and placed a crucifix on the breast. Sister Martha had whispered us to rise, and the Superior, observing my agitation, said, "Be calm, and join with us in prayer: *she* is a happy soul." I knelt accordingly, repeating the litany, until the clock struck two, when we all assembled in the choir, in which was a fire and wax-taper burning. After meditation, matins, lauds, and prayers, and a Novena (a particular supplication,) that our requests might be granted, we assembled for diet, and for the first time we had some toasted bread. We also had recreation granted in the time of silence. The Superior sent for us, and instructed us how to appear at the burial of our sister Mary Magdalene, and accompanied us to view her corpse. She was laid out in the habit of a professed Nun, in a *black veil ;* her hands were tied together, and her vows placed in them. The Superior remarked, that this was done by the Bishop's request. At the evening recreation the Bishop appeared on high spirits, and rejoiced that so happy a soul had at last arrived in heaven; and commenced the "*Dies illæ,*" on the piano-forte, accompanied by the voices of the others. He told me I should have Miss Mary Magdalene for my intercessor, for she was to be canonized. The Mother Superior permitted me to embrace the sisters, and gave me the Mother-assistant for my Mother. She then presented us with the relics of the saints, that by their means we might gain indulgences. She mentioned a "retreat" as being necessary for our perseverance in a religious life.

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* The bell was struck *three* times to call the Superior, *twice* to call the Mother-assistant, and *once* to call Mrs. Mary Benedict.

The second day after this, the coffin was placed in the choir, and the funeral services were performed in the following manner: Dr. O'Flagherty sang the office, while the Bishop chanted it. Father Taylor officiated at the altar. Four or five of the altar boys were present, and dressed in altar robes, &c.; two of them held wax tapers, a third holy water, a fourth a crucifix. One swung incense in the censor over the corpse, and another, at the same time, sprinkled holy water upon it. We performed our part by saying the "Dies illæ." The coffin* was then carried to the tomb by two Irishmen. The Bishop, priests, and others followed, singing, and carrying lighted tapers and a large crucifix. The corpse was also followed by some of the young ladies from the public schools, while the religieuses remained in the convent. After depositing the coffin in the tomb, the clergy retired to dinner. We were permitted, at recreation, to hear the clergy converse on various subjects. The Superior told us that the customary libera and prayers for faithful souls departed might be omitted, as the Bishop said Magdalene's soul had gone immediately to heaven. The novices were permitted to relate visions of guardian angels, &c. At the next evening recreation, the Bishop again visited us, and appeared in very good spirits, played on his flute, and sung. He soon went away, and the Superior said he only came to cheer up our spirits.

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* My feelings were much hurt to witness the manner in which the lid of the coffin was forced down to its place. The corpse had swollen much, and become too large for the coffin.

Having only a few minutes to stay at confession, I had until this time kept the secret of my friend, Mary Francis; but the Bishop perceived that I grew more discontented, endeavoured to comfort me, by saying I was not bound to that order; but he wished to know more particularly my reasons for disliking it, and began to threaten me with judgments; and observing my agitation, said he must know what lay so heavily on my mind. He asked me if it was anything connected with the sickness and death of Mary Magdalene. I told him, "No, not that in particular; I do not like the Superior." He said I must tell him instantly all the wicked thoughts that had disturbed my mind, and asked me various improper questions, the meaning of which I did not then understand, and which I decline mentioning. I was so confused, that I inadvertently spoke Mary Francis' name, and begged his pardon for listening to her; and he immediately exclaimed, "Ah! I know all; confess to me what she told you, and do not dare to deceive me; you cannot deceive God." I told him nearly all that had passed between Mary Francis and myself. He said that Mary Francis was not a fit subject for any order, and they were obliged to send her away; that she was deranged, and I had done very wrong in listening to an insane person. He said I could not go to the order she mentioned, and that I could be more happy with the Sisters of Charity, who were coming to reside there. He said that worldlings hated me for the good part I had chosen, and would ridicule me should I go back to the world, and then repeated some scripture texts. I still persisted in saying it was my determination not to remain in that order, and told him I disliked the Superior; and he gave me a penance to perform. I was desirous at that time to have them think me obedient, or I should not have condescended to such humiliations. My motive was prudence, not want of courage, for by this time I had become disgusted with the life I led, and their manner of proceeding.

The next time the Bishop was with us, he requested me to sing any favourite tune I chose. I sang the "Ode on Science," which, every one knows, is highly patriotic. At the close of the first stanza, he spoke a few words in French to the Superior, who made a signal for me to stop; but not understanding her, I continued until she had made several signals, when I perceived she was evidently displeased with my singing, and then recalled the words which I supposed were offensive.

One day the Superior asked me what it was that lay so heavily on my mind, as the Mother-assistant had previously found me in tears while at our examination of conscience. I excused myself by replying, I was thinking of my dear mother, (which, though true, was not the cause of my grief.) She then left me, but not without distrust, the eyes of the community being upon me. The next time we met at recreation, one of them remarked, she hoped there was not another Judas among them. I endeavoured to betray no emotion, but they still mistrusted I had other views; for, while sitting at my diet in the refectory, I observed my food was of a kind that I had never seen before. It consisted of several balls of a darkish colour, about the size of a nutmeg, of a bitter astringent taste; what they were I never knew. I ate them as I did my other diet, and strove to exhibit no fearful sensations.

A few days after the death of Mary Magdalene, her trunk was brought forward, that the Superior might examine it, and distribute its contents to those she considered the most worthy. She gave to each one some little relic, and to Miss Mary Joseph, sister to Magdalene, some letters which she had composed to be read, as the Superior said, after her death. They were quite affecting, and caused Mary Joseph to weep much, for which the Superior reprimanded her.

Some days after this, the Superior sent for me to practice music, and then made a signal for me to follow her into the Bishop's room. This room is separated from the others by shutters, with curtains drawing on the chapel side. When I had kissed her feet, she desired to know why I cried at my practice in the choir. I rather imprudently answered, "I could not tell; I did not cry much." (It then struck me, she could not have seen me, as I was alone.) I said I was very cold,* particularly my feet; and I had been practising "Blue-eyed Mary," and was affected by the words. She said that what I asserted was false, and commanded me to tell her the true cause, in a moment; and pulling the handkerchief from my hand, she bade me kneel and tell her at once, or I should be punished. I was so frightened by the threats and manner of the Superior, that I sobbed aloud, and blood gushed from my nose and mouth. She then seized and shook me by the arm, and seated me, saying, "Hush! be calm, or the young ladies may hear you as they pass the door to go to their practice." She asked me again and again to tell her why I shed tears in the choir, and why I felt such a repugnance to communicate my thoughts. I replied, because I had made a promise not to tell, and I could not break it. The Superior turned pale, but suppressing her feelings, bade me break that promise directly, and asked to whom I had made it. I replied I could not tell any one but my confessor. Says she, embracing me, "What! my dear sister, not obey your Superior?—tell me, my dear, and I will stand responsible for you before the judgment-seat. To whom did you make the promise?—to Mary Magdalene or Mary Francis?" She also asked me if I had related all the causes of my discontent in confession. I replied, "Not all," and began to weep again. She endeavoured to console me, saying, she could not heal my wounds unless I opened my whole feelings to her; and comparing her words to those of our Divine Redeemer, took me by the hand, and with seeming affection, told me to unfold all my feelings to her, as to an own mother; and said she thought it her duty to stay by me until I should relate the cause of my grief, that she might pour into my heart a heavenly balm, &c. I told her I had not seen or heard from my friends, to whom I had written. She said that was nothing to the point; she was my friend; and asked me if I called persons who insulted the house of God my friends. I replied, "No." She then said one person had been there who called herself my sister, and who threw pebbles at the convent. She also mentioned another person, who came with my sister, and whom she said she would not take to "wipe her feet on."*

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* The rooms were seldom comfortably warmed, and at times I suffered much from the cold.

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* I learn from my sister, that while I was in the convent she and another young lady went there to invite me to my sister M.'s wedding. She asked the portress if I could be seen at that hour, who replied she would

After making this observation, she left me for a few moments to compose myself. Returning, she asked if I knew where I was, and if I had concluded to obey her, or break my vows of obedience, and be severely punished. I answered, "No, Mamère, I will tell all I can remember;" for I judged from her threats and looks that I should be confined in a cellar, or have something more severe than usual inflicted upon me; the rules of the order also led me to think so. But notwithstanding my fears of the Superior, I still kept secret the real name of Miss Mary Francis, and her promise of writing to Mrs. G. or my friends respecting my situation. She then dismissed me for a while. But my thoughts soon whispered me that our "*Ghostly Father*" (as our Director taught us to call him) had made the Superior acquainted with what passed in secret confession, because without such knowledge she never could have used such threatening language, and never could have been displeased, as she was, at words which I had used in secret confession

see, and asked her to walk in, inquired her name, &c., went out, and soon returned with the answer that the scholars were not permitted to come to the parlour that day. My sister told her it was important that she should see me, and she could not come away without. The portress left the room, returned, closed the shutters, retired, and presently the Superior entered, walking between two servants, and made signs for my sister to approach, inquiring her and the other lady's name, and their business. On being informed, she mentioned that I could not be seen, but she would deliver any message my sister desired; that the young ladies never violated the rules for the sake of seeing company, and that I did not wish to see any worldly friends, or have any communication with them; that my mind was wholly occupied with heavenly things; that I was perfectly happy, and "growing as fat as butter;" that I was fast improving in my studies, learning music, and drawing, (untrue.) In consequence of my sister's weeping, and desiring her to name a time when I could be seen, the Superior said she would go and inquire whether I desired to see her. The Superior soon returned, and told my sister that I did not wish to see her, or any worldly relative; but the Superior told her that if I chose I could come to the wedding. They both left the convent with the impression that I was a public scholar, and could leave when I chose; and thought it passing strange that I should refuse to see them, as I had, before going to the convent, requested them to visit me. My sister imagined that I had become so infatuated with the Catholic religion as to lose all sisterly affection for those who were averse to it, and went away weeping.

alone with the Bishop. She asked me how I dared to converse with Mary Francis on the slate. Now, she never could have known this, only from the Bishop. I was never fully aware of their arts, in getting secrets by confession, until they became too visible to be misunderstood. I then became more reserved, and the Superior remarked that I did not show so much frankness of manner as formerly; the reason of which the reader will understand to be, that every eye was on me. A different course I could not adopt, having lost confidence in my confessor. I did not follow his advice, but resolved to follow, as nearly as I could conscientiously, the advice of Mary Francis, being confident she was my friend.

I felt a repugnance at the idea of returning to the world, supposing that many would believe me a person romantic and visionary, and inexperienced in the ways of the world, and therefore unfit for society. And I was also particularly averse to taking this step, because of the solemn promise of seclusion I had taken. Nevertheless, I resolved to leave that convent, and write to Miss Mary Francis from my friend Mrs. G.'s, but was undetermined whether I should return to the world. I had reason to think that my letters were never sent to my friends, and determined to convey one privately. I stole a few moments, and hastily wrote some lines with my pencil, and hid them behind the altar; but the billet was discovered, and I never heard from it.

It was my turn that week to read as "lecturess." A book was placed before me in the refectory, called "Rules of St. Augustine," and the place marked to read was concerning a religieuse receiving letters clandestinely. I could not control my feelings, for what I read was very affecting. At this time we were directed to remain in the refectory, instead of assembling in the community, and told to repeat "Hail Mary" before a picture. The Superior, and Mother-assistant consented to have me practice music no more during the cold weather. They also permitted me to wear warmer clothing.

One day, as I was sitting alone in the refectory in the time of silence, the Superior came in, and after kneeling and extending her arms in the form of a cross, she kissed the floor, and rising, walked towards the door; returning, she seated herself on the bench beside me. I asked her if I should bring a chair; she answered, "No," and inquired how I felt, and why I changed colour while at the table. I replied that my mouth was very sore, and it hurt me to read. She wished to know what made my mouth sore. I told her I thought it was something I had eaten. She said, laughingly, it was the canker, and asked if it was not sent as a judgment for some sin. I replied that I did not know; I had not felt very well for some days, and thought it was partly owing to want of exercise. She then sent sister Martha to conduct me into a room at the further end of the convent, for the first time, called a "mangle room." There were some sisters there kneeling in devotion, and one turning a machine used for pressing clothes, instead of ironing them, called a mangle. She presented me with some altar laces, and told me to have them prepared for the altar the next day at the ringing of the bell. While there I was watched very narrowly; but as I had gathered from the Superior's conversation, at different times, that the gates were watched by the porters and dogs, which were of great value to the convent, I did not dare, then, to make my escape, but appeared as cheerful as possible. The sisters appeared very happy, it being a day of recreation in the community, and the celebration of some great saint. The Superior, as she passed her portrait, remarked, that she never looked at it but that it reminded her of smiling. She appeared in unusually good spirits, and gave us permission to wish each other happy feasts, not of luxury and feasting, in the common acceptation of the terms, but of prayers to the saints to free us from purgatory. In the course of the Superior's conversation, she said she had read in the newspapers of a new law which had been passed that no person who was under the age of twenty-eight or thirty years should be allowed to keep any school. The Mother-assistant approved of this law, and said it was good, as it would remove the difficulty which overseers had with young teachers who were unfit to take charge of a school, particularly the discipline.

I would here confess my fault (if a fault it was) of not acknowledging all my obligations in secret confession, and of pretending to think Mary Francis deranged; and also of acquiescing in the Superior's commands in her presence with feigned humility. I did this, that my design should not be suspected.

A letter was read to the community, that was addressed to the Superior, from Bishop P., of Emmetsburgh. In it he rejoiced to learn that the "community" was set free of that person who was deranged, and whose dispositions he had known to his sorrow from her youth. He lamented the departure of Magdalene, who no doubt was a saint reigning in glory, after what she had been willing to suffer to gain salvation.* I was sent for to attend to the Superior in the Bishop's room, after Mass. She was folding his cassock and robe. When I entered, she bade me do as my directory taught, and said I had let trifles make an impression upon me, and weak minds only allowed trifles to affect them. Giving me the letter, she bade me tell her what I thought of it. I read it, and said I could not believe what Mary Francis had told me, if she were deranged, but yet I had rather go to the convent where she was educated than stay at that on Mount Benedict. She asked me if I thought of going without protection. I begged of her to let me see some of my friends there, or permit me to return to the world. After saying she had sent my letters† to my friends, who, if they wished, could come there and see me, she told me not to trouble myself, for the Bishop would soon be there, and I could talk with him about it.‡

One Sabbath after Mass, while we were in the choir repeating the examination of conscience or monthly review, I was called in a whisper into the community with the rest of the sisters, but pretended not to hear. The others went in while I remained. I heard the Bishop speak to them as they went in; but I had absented myself from confession and communion that day, and did not wish to see the Bishop on account of his previous language. After the doors had been opened several times, one of the religieuses (sister Martha)§ came in and knelt with me. The bell then rang, and I went into the refectory, waiting as usual for the Mother-assistant's instructions in the Latin office. Sister Martha soon entered, and asked me if I knew where the Mother-assistant was, and whether I had been in the community since Mass. I replied, No, but was waiting for the Mother-assistant. After saying office, I went down to the refectory to string some rosary beads, and afterwards returned to the choir, where the novices were telling their beads. The Superior came in to join in devotion, and remained until diet, I accidentally *touched* the Superior; she looked at me, and appeared much displeased. At recreation the religieuses were very desirous to learn the state of my mind. I strove to appear unembarrassed, and answered their questions with seeming ignorance. I was not censured for my transgression of the rules, nor was any remark made upon it.

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* Since leaving the convent, I have written to Miss Mary Francis for information in regard to this letter, but have received no satisfactory answer. I have, however, received from her three letters.

† My friends never received any letter from me.

‡ I cannot remember all that passed in confession, for I was at this time much confused; however, the Bishop asked me how I should like to go to a convent in Canada, which I objected to.

§ I will not presume to say much about sister Martha, as I never conversed with her, and therefore was not so able to judge of her suffer-

In the evening we were permitted to sit in the community, which had been warmed. After repeating the offices, and during the time of silence, a dog barked in front of the community, and we heard a noise like some one thumping upon the doors. The religieuses fell down before the altar and appeared much frightened. I kept my seat, but at that moment heard the window raised, and the Superior ask who was there. No answer was made to her inquiry. I then felt somewhat alarmed, but endeavoured to betray as little fear as possible. What this noise was, or for what reason it was made, I never could learn, but I have supposed it was done to see if I was easily alarmed. The like had several times occurred.

About this time the martyrologies of some saints were read at table; also the history of saints who had been tempted by Satan. Perhaps it may be well to relate one or two. A certain saint, who was strongly tempted by Satan, retired to a desert, and confined himself to a cell scarcely large enough for him to lie at ease. He retired here for pious purposes. After mortifying his body for a long time, he prayed for rain that he

ings, &c. She was a professed lay religieuse, and I believe an American. She was called the portress, and one of those, I learned, who chose rather to be a door-keeper than to dwell among the wicked. She, together with three of the choir religieuse, lodged in the infirmary with me. While she slept there, she, as did Magdalene, coughed at intervals during the night. Sister Martha often approached the Superior kneeling and weeping.

might quench his thirst, which was granted. A bird came and brought him food, which renewed his strength, and he returned to his monastery and was never more troubled with the temptations of Satan.

Some noblemen once invited a poor wandering monk, who was begging for the monastery, to dine with them on Friday. They helped him to meat; he made the sign of the cross, refusing to eat it. They asked the reason; and drawing their swords, threatened his life unless he did eat it. He told them if they would allow him a few minutes that he might pray, and and give him a pewter plate to cover the meat, he would eat it. After praying a few minutes that the meat might become fish, he took off the plate, and behold it was fish; and he then sat down and ate, and they believed him an inspired man.

Many accounts of those who had become saints were so disagreeable and even revolting, that I will not attempt to relate or describe them.

As several of my friends desire to learn something concerning the scholars, I will relate what little I know. I never had permission to enter any of the rooms in the recluse apartments, except those before named, and never to the public apartments, except on examination days, when the Superior and Bishop were present. During one vacation, the young ladies who remained were permitted to visit the community, to give the members presents.* I never spoke to them but to thank them for a present. They were sometimes at vacation permitted to enter the community and embrace the religieuses.

Complaints were often brought to the Superior while at recreation, and sometimes repeated aloud. They were generally violations of the *rules*, which were very strict. They were sometimes punished for refusing to say prayers to the saints, which they said their parents disapproved off: also for refusing to read Roman Catholic history. A Miss T., of C. was brought to the Superior, and reprimanded for writing her discontents to her friends. The Superior destroyed one half the letter, and gave me the blank leaf to write a prayer on. Another was reprimanded severely because she had said to the other young misses, she should be glad when the time came for her to leave the convent, &c. The superior, shaking her severely, obliged her to kneel and perform an act of contrition by kissing the floor, and saying that she was very sorry that she had offended her teachers, and begged the forgiveness of all.

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* Although we received presents, we were not allowed to keep them.

Some of the young ladies were apparently great favourites of the Superior and Bishop. They sometimes sent for them to bestow presents and caress them. One young lady, of whom the Bishop was a guardian, was treated very ill. I often saw her in tears, and once heard the teacher tell the Superior that it was because she had no dress suitable to wear when she went into the world to see her friends. She was designed, as I learned, to be a teacher in a convent in Canada.

A number of the young ladies were unhappy, whose names I have forgotten. I learned that they disliked the discipline.

After this, the Superior was sick of the influenza, and I did not see her for two or three days. I attended to my offices as usual, such as preparing the wine and the water, the chalice, host, holy water, and vestments, &c. One day, however, I had forgotten to attend to this duty at the appointed hour, but recollecting it, and fearing lest I should offend the Superior by reason of negligence, I asked permission to leave the room, telling a novice that our Mother had given me permission to attend to it; she answered, "O yes, sister, you can go then." I went immediately to the chapel, and was arranging the things for Mass, which was to take place the next day. While busily employed, I heard the adjoining door open, and the Bishop's voice distinctly. Being conscious that I was there at the wrong hour, I kept as still as possible, lest I should be discovered. While in this room, I overheard the following conversation between the Bishop and Superior :—The Bishop, after taking snuff in his usual manner, began by saying—"Well, well, what does Agnes say? how does she appear?" I heard distinctly from the Superior in reply, that, "According to all appearances, she is either possessed of insensibility or great self-command." The Bishop walked about the room, seeming much displeased with the Superior, and cast many severe and improper reflections upon Mary Francis, who, it was known, had influenced me; all which his lordship will well remember. He then told the Superior that the establishment was in its infancy, and that it would not do to have such reports go abroad as these persons would carry; that Agnes must be taken care of; that they had better send her to Canada, and that a carriage could cross the line in two or three days. He added, by way of repetition, that it would not do for the Protestants to get hold of those things and make another "fuss." He then gave the Superior instructions how to entice me into the carriage, and they soon both left the room, and I heard no more.

The reader may judge of my feelings at this moment; a young and inexperienced female, shut out from the world, and entirely beyond the reach of friends; threatened with speedy transportation to another country, and involuntary confinement for life, with no power to resist the immediate fulfilment of the startling conspiracy I had overheard. It was with much difficulty that I controlled my feelings; but aware of the importance of not betraying any knowledge of what had taken place, I succeeded in returning to the refectory unsuspected. I now became firmly impressed, that unless I could contrive to break away from the convent soon, it would be for ever too late; and that every day I remained rendered my escape more difficult.

The next day I went to auricular confession, not without trembling and fear lest I should betray myself; but having committed my case to God, I went somewhat relieved in my feelings. At a previous confession I had refused to go to Canada; but at this time, in reply to the Bishop's inquiry, I answered that I would consider the subject; for I thought it wrong to evince any want of fortitude, especially when I had so much need of it. I did not alter my course of conduct, fearing that if I appeared perfectly contented, I should be suspected of an intention to escape.

It was my turn during that week to officiate in the offices. While reading I felt something rise in my throat, which two or three times I tried to swallow, but it still remained. I felt alarmed, it being what I had never before experienced.* At recreation I was asked what ailed me, and replied that I could not tell; but I described my feelings, and was told that I was vapourish.

They were very desirous that week to know if my feelings were changed. I said they were, and endeavoured to make it appear to them that Satan had left me; but in reality I feared I should never escape from them, though I had determined to do so the first opportunity.

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* I have since named the circumstance to a physician, who says it was fear alone.

I was in the habit of talking in my sleep, and had often awoke and found the religieuses kneeling around my couch, and was told that they were praying for me. Fearing lest I should let fall some word or words which would betray me, I tied a handkerchief around my face, determining, if observed, to give the appearance of having the toothache, and so avoid detection. For some days I was not well, and my mind, as may naturally be supposed, sympathized with my body, and many things occurred that were unpleasant to me, which I shall pass by unnoticed.

But what I have now to relate is of importance. A few days after, while at my needle in the refectory, I heard a carriage drive to the door of the convent, and heard a person step into the Superior's room. Immediately the Superior passed lightly along the passage which led to the back entry, where the men-servants or porters were employed, and reprimanded them in a loud tone for something they were doing. She then opened the door of the refectory, and seemed indifferent about entering, but at length seated herself beside me, and began conversation, by saying, "Well, my dear girl, what do you think of going to see your friends?" I said, "what friends, Mamère?" Said she, "you would like to see your friends, Mrs. G. and Father B., and talk with them respecting your call to another order." Before I had time to answer, she commenced taking off my garb, telling me she was in haste, and that a carriage was in waiting to convey me to my friends. I answered, with as cheerful a countenance as I could assume, "O, Mamère, I am sorry to give you so much trouble; I had rather see them here first." While we were conversing, I heard a little bell ring several times. The Superior said, "Well, my dear, make up your mind; the bell calls me to the parlour." She soon returned, and asked if I had made up my mind to go. I answered, "No, Mamère." She then said I had failed in obedience to her, and as I had so often talked of going to another order with such a person as Mary Francis, I had better go immediately; and again she said, raising her voice, "You have failed in respect to your Superior; you must recollect that I am a lady of quality, brought up in opulence, and accustomed to all the luxuries of life." I told her that I was very sorry to have listened to anything wrong against her dignity. She commanded me to kneel, which I did; and if ever tears were a relief to me, they were then. She stamped upon the floor violently, and asked, if I was innocent why I did not go to communion. I told her I felt unworthy to go to communion at that time.* The bell rang again, and she left the room, and in a few moments returning, desired me to tell her immediately what I thought of doing, for as she had promised to protect me for ever, she must know my mind. She then mentioned that the carriage was still in waiting. I still declined going, for I was convinced their object was not to carry me to Mrs. G. and Priest B., to consult about another order, but directly to Canada. I told her I had concluded to ask my confessor's advice, and meditate on it some time longer. She rather emphatically said, "You can meditate on it if you please, and do as you like about going to see your friends." She said that my sister had been there, and did not wish to see me. Our conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of a novice. The Superior then gave me my choice, either to remain on Mount Benedict, or go to some other order, and by the next week to make up my mind, as it remained with me to decide. She then gave me a heavy penance to perform, which was, instead of going to the choir as usual, at the ringing of the bell, to go to the mangle-room and repeat "Ave Marias" while turning the mangle. While performing my penance, sister Martha left the room, and soon returning, said she had orders to release me from my penance, and to direct me to finish my meditation on the picture of a saint, which she gave me. But instead of saying the prayers that I was bidden, I fervently prayed to be delivered from their wicked hands.

They appeared much pleased with my supposed reformation, and I think they believed me sincere. The Superior, as a test of my humility, kept me reading; that is, made no signal for me to stop, until the diet was over, when a plate of apple parings, the remnant of her dessert, was brought from the Superior's table, and the signal given for me to lay down my book and eat them.* I ate a few of them only, hoping they might think my abstaining from the remainder self-denial in me, and not suspect me of discontent or disobedience. I performed all my penances with apparent cheerfulness.

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* My eyes were opened; I found myself in an error, and had been too enthusiastic in my first views of a convent life. I was discontented with my situation, and was using some deception towards the Superior and the religieuses in order to effect an escape; therefore I did not feel worthy to attend communion.

The Bishop visited the convent on the next holyday, and on their remarking that he had been absent some time, he made many excuses, one of which was, he had been engaged in collecting money to establish the order of the "Sisters of Charity" where the "community" once lived; and he spoke of the happiness of the life of a "Religieuse" of this order. After he played on the piano, "Away with Melancholy," the Superior asked me to play, and the Bishop said, "By all means." I complied, but my voice faltered through fear, when Miss Mary Benedict apologized for me, by saying I had not practised much lately, on account of the Mother-assistant's engagements, and the young ladies occupying all the instruments. She showed the Bishop a robe which I had been busy in working for him. He said I must not on any account neglect my music. After telling one of his stories about a monk, who had disobeyed the rules of his order until Satan took possession of him, he left us, saying he hoped "Old Scratch" would not take possession of our hearts as he did that monk's, and hoped that we should never have another Judas in the community.

Some days after the conversation which I heard between the Bishop and Superior while behind the altar, I was in the refectory, at my work, and heard the noise of the porters, who were employed sawing wood, and I conjectured the gate might be open for them. I thought it a good opportunity to escape, which I contemplated doing in this manner, viz., to ask permission to leave the room, and as I passed the entry, to secret about my habit a hood which hung there, that would help to conceal part of my garb from particular observation; then to feign an errand to the infirmarian from the Superior, as I imagined I could escape by the door of the infirmary. This plan formed, and just as I was going, I heard a band of music playing, as it seemed, in front of the convent. I heard the young ladies assembling in the parlour, and the porters left their work, as I supposed, for the sawing ceased. I felt quite revived, and felt more confident I should be able to escape without detection, even should it be necessary to get over the fence. I feigned an errand, and asked permission of Miss Mary Austin to leave the room,* which she granted. I succeeded in secreting the hood, and the book in which Miss Mary Francis had left her address, and then knocked three times at the door which led to the lay apartments. A person came to the door, who appeared in great distress.†

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* This was the second time I had been presented with apple parings by the Superior.

I asked her where sister Bennett and sister Bernard were; she left me to find them. I gave the infirmarian to understand that the Superior wished to see her, and I desired her to go immediately to her room. These gone, I unlocked and passed out by the back door, and as the gate appeared shut, I climbed upon the *slats* which confined the grape vines to the fence; but they gave way, and falling to the ground, I sprained my wrist. I then thought I would try the gate, which I found unfastened, and as there was no one near it, I ran through, and hurried to the nearest house. In getting over the fences between the convent and this house, I fell and hurt myself badly. On reaching the house, I fell exhausted upon the door step; but rising as soon as possible, I opened the door, and was allowed to enter. I inquired if Catholics lived there; one answered, "No." For some time I could answer none of their questions, being so much exhausted.

As soon as they understood that I requested protection, they afforded me every assistance in their power. I had been only a few minutes there, when I heard the alarm bell ringing at the convent. On looking out at the window, we saw two of the porters searching in the canal with long poles. After searching some time, they returned to the convent, and I saw their dogs scenting my course.

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* Sister Martha (the sick religieuse) was scouring the floor at this time, which I saw was quite too hard for her. Not long after I left, I inquired after her, and learned she was no more.

† This was Sarah S., (a domestic,) who appeared very unhappy while I was in the convent. I often saw her in tears, and learned from the Superior that she was sighing for the veil. When I saw my brother, I informed him of this circumstance, and he soon found who she was, and ascertained that some ladies in Cambridge had been to see the Superior, who used to them pretty much the same language she did to my sister. I have since seen her. She is still under the influence of the Roman Church, but assures me that she did not refuse to see the ladies, as the Superior had represented to them, and she wept because of ill health, &c.

While at that house, I looked in a glass, and was surprised, nay, even frightened, at my own figure, it was so pale and emaciated.*

Notwithstanding my wrist being sprained, I wrote a few lines to Mrs. G., whom I still supposed my friend, begging her to come to my relief, for I did not wish my father and sisters to see me in my present condition. I thanked God that he had inclined his ear unto me, and delivered me out of the hands of the wicked. But here was not an end of my afflictions. Mrs. G. came in the evening to convey me to her house. She would not allow me to say anything about my escape at Mr. K.'s, and wished me to return to the convent that night, I resolved not to go. After whispering a long time to me about the importance of secrecy, she left Mr. K.'s, as we supposed, for home; but she soon returned, saying she at first intended to leave me at Mr. K.'s, but had concluded to take me home with her, as she desired some further conversation. Her manners appeared very strange, yet I did not distrust her friendship. Before leaving Mr. K.'s, she requested me to obtain from them a promise not to say anything about my escape, which I did.

After I arrived at Mrs. G.'s, I showed her my wounds, and my feet, which had been frozen, and told her I did not find the convent what I had expected. She seemed to sympathize with me, and to do all in her power for my recovery. She did not then urge me to say much, as I was quite weak.

The next morning the convent boy on horseback came galloping up to the house, and delivered to Mrs. G. a letter from the Superior, and was very particular, as he said he had orders not to give it to any one except to her. She refused to tell me its contents, and sent directly for a chaise to go to the convent. She took with her the religious garb I had worn on my head, and the book containing Miss Mary Francis' name.† Meanwhile I endeavoured to compose myself, and wrote to Miss Mary Francis, agreeably to my promise, informing her of my afflictions, and of my reluctance to return to the bustle of the world. I proposed to her some questions, and requested her advice. I wrote that I could not think otherwise than that the Superior and Bishop were very wicked. I did not write much, thinking her confessor might advise her not to answer it, as it was probable that the Superior would write to him; and I was anxious to convince Mrs. G. that Mary Francis thought as I did, for Mrs. G. would not permit me to say one word against the Superior or Bishop; and I was resolved to ascertain if Mary Francis was living and happy. When Mrs. G. returned from the convent, she said the Superior had too exalted an opinion of me to think I would say anything against the institution, and she had sent me a present, as she still considered me one of her flock; and if I had gone astray, she should do everything she could for me, in a temporal as well as in a spiritual sense, if I would repent. My words were just these: "I cannot receive any present from the Superior; she is a wicked woman, and I do not believe her friendship pure." At this moment Priest B. drove to the door, and desired to see me. I did not think myself in danger, and conversed with him; but I soon found that he had seen the Superior and Bishop. He said, that as he was my sponsor, he considered it his duty to advise me, and hoped I was not going to break my vows to God, and expose myself to the world; because, if I did, I should be ridiculed and laughed at. He said he had before conveyed a novice to the "Sisters of Charity," and would convey me to them, or to some other retired place which I might choose, and that he was deeply concerned for my welfare. I told him I could not think of going anywhere then, as my health would not allow my exposure to the cold, and that Mrs. G. thought it best I should remain with her until I was better, when I should visit my father. He then exclaimed, "What letter is this?" taking up and reading the one I had written to Mary Francis. After reading it, he appeared surprised, and desired to know how I came in possession of her name. He said he should

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* It will be perceived that this does not correspond with what the Superior told my sister.

† This book I brought away, because Mary Francis had pricked hers

and her father's real name out in it, and I wished to refer to it, in order to write her. I took it from my writing desk, and slipped it into my pocket.

have seen me at the convent had he known I was discontented; and that if the Superior had done wrong, it was no reason I should do so, by speaking against the convent or those connected with it. He then shook hands with me, and said he would converse with me again when I was more composed, and left the house.

I soon began to suspect, by Mrs. G.'s manner, that she was not my friend, and that if she had an opportunity she would deliver me into the hands of the Catholics; for I learned from her little daughter that her mother had given her to the Catholic church, because the Superior had offered to educate her free of expense, and that her mother was acquainted with the Superior before I went to the convent. Now, this I did not know before, and I began to be more guarded, and to fear that all belonging to the Romish church were alike. When I gave Mrs. G. the letter to send to the post-office, she asked if I was afraid she would break it open; and at another time afterwards, she told me I was afraid she would poison me, because I refused to take medicine, which I thought I did not need. Such thoughts did not occur to my mind.

In a day or two, Priest B. again came, and after much persuasion from Mrs. G., I consented to see him. At first he appeared very pleasant, said he had come to render me assistance, and begged me, as I valued my religion and reputation, to take his advice. I told him that I wished none of his assistance or advice; that I should go to my brother's, at East Cambridge, as soon as possible; that as respected my religion, I did not believe in one which justified its followers in doing wrong; and that I was not at all apprehensive that my reputation would be injured on that account by returning to the world. He affected considerable contempt for my aged parent, and ridiculed many things which he said he had heard of my father, and he said,* "Is it possible that a young lady wishes to have her name made public?" I answered, "You very well know I should shrink from such a thing; but I should rather return to the world and expose myself to its scorn, than remain subject to the commands of a tyrant." "Then," said he, "if you are determined to return to the world, you may go to ruin there for all I can do; and rely upon it, you will shed tears of blood in consequence of the step you have taken, if you do not repent and confess all at the secret tribunal of God." I told him I should confess to none but God, and that my conscience prompted me to do as I had done. He asked me if I would go with him to the Superior, as she wanted to see me. I replied, "No, I will not, for I believe you or any other Catholic would (if directed) take my life, were it in your power, as truly as I believe I am living, and I will not trust myself in your clutches again." At these words he turned pale, and asked me what I had seen or heard at the convent that made me think so. I refused to say more, and retired at his exclamation that it would be *death* to me. Mrs. G. endeavoured to console me with the assurance that he meant right, and that it would, they feared, be death to my soul.

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* He informed me I should be anathematized publicly, if I did not repent.

Mrs. G. afterwards accused me of endeavouring, at the time of my escape, to induce sister Bernard to leave the convent. The Superior sent me some articles of wearing apparel, which for a time I was obliged to accept. My sister called; she had been at the convent, and was informed that I was at Mrs. G.'s. She was overjoyed to see me, but much grieved because (as she thought) I had refused to see her at the convent. I endeavoured to calm her, and promised to explain all another time, assuring her my affection was not diminished, and that I should soon visit her. I did not then explain to her the manner of my leaving the convent. It being late in the evening, she soon returned home. The Misses K. also called, and by their conversation I feared they would inform my father of my situation before I should be well and prepared to see him; and I did not wish to grieve him with a knowledge of what had taken place. Mrs. G. said she expected my father would rave at her for having advised me as she had done, if he should find me at her house.

A Catholic lady, who had stood my sponsor, and who brought a letter from Mary Francis,* called, and conveyed me to her house in Charlestown, where my father and brother soon found me, and desired I would return to my friends, which I did in the evening. Before leaving, however, I called on Priest B. and told him that I could never think of again attending the

* This letter had been broken open.

Romish Church, giving my reasons, and adding that I had been deceived in their religion, and in those who believed it; that I wished to take my leave of him, with the hope that he would not think I indulged any wrong feelings towards them, or that I desired to injure the Romish Church, but sincerely hoped they would reform. I told him this while he sat in the confessional. He remained unmoved, and would not allow that I had been treated ill. He said that I could not but know that the step I had taken would be a great injury to the convent. I assured him that it was not to be charged to me, but to the Superior and Bishop, who by their conduct had compelled me to take that step. I also told him that I believed it had been his intention to deliver me again into their hands, but I had broken the chains which bound me, and felt free; and that I should always be thankful that I had delivered myself from the bondage of what I should consider to be a *Romish yoke*, rather than the true cross of Christ.

After I had returned to my brother's, Mrs. G. sent to me by her little daughter some money, which she said I had given to the Superior. Five dollars of this sum, and some wearing apparel, I considered as not my own, and sent them back with a note to Madam St. George, stating that I declined receiving any thing from them as *presents*, but if they would return what wearing apparel, &c. *belonged* to me, it would be properly acknowledged.

And now I have endeavoured, to the extent of my ability, to give a true and faithful account of what fell under my observation during my sojourn among the Catholics, and especially during my residence at the monastery on Mount Benedict. And I leave it with the reader to judge of my motives for becoming a member of the Ursuline Community, and for renouncing it.

If in consequence of my having for a time strayed from the *true religion*, I am enabled to become an humble instrument in the hands of God in warning others of the errors of Romanism, and preventing even *one* from falling into its *snares*, and from being shrouded in its delusions, I shall feel richly rewarded.

SUPPLEMENT

TO

SIX MONTHS IN A CONVENT.

SUCH is the interesting and affecting narrative of Miss Reed, and, assuming its truth, excepting those few parts of it which she acknowledges in her notes to have been hastily and inaccurately recorded, it must be considered, *in its class*, as one of the most powerful appeals to the Protestant world against the absurdities and blasphemies of Popery that ever appeared in print. It has been generally objected in America, and will no doubt be so in England; that the artifice which the writer in her novitiate frequently practised, according to her own confession, on her Superior, the Bishop, and others, especially as her sufferings increased and her doubts of the goodness of the system multiplied, argues against the credit due to the narrative. That reader, however, must have little sympathy with a young sufferer, conscious of having been betrayed into a course of suffering by those who pretended to be her best friends, and who even assumed to be the agents of Heaven for her good; who can hastily impeach her general veracity upon this slight ground, and suppose that because the persecuted child now and then attempted to relieve her pains by misrepresentation, the free and independent woman can deliberately mature such incipient deceit into a volume of falsehood.

But more of this hereafter. Whether the book now put into the hands of English readers is one required by the state of the times—is one rendered necessary by any increase in the monastic system and spirit—forms a question of much greater importance. Convents once were seats of superior learning, if not seats of superior devotion; and there may be individuals within their walls now, who cultivate the heart as well as mind with more industry and to better effect than could have been expected in any mode of life. This argument, however, has lost its force in the altered condition of society, especially in England and America. The freedom of the press, and the unfettered state of literature at large, forbid the thought that from the cells of a monastery any effort of mind can proceed that shall rival or approach the productions of modern letters. Then, with regard to religion—who does not perceive that the present age differs as widely from the age of prosperous convents as any two periods of history on this subject can do. We are apt to forget that Divine Providence materially diversifies the direction and operation of religious principle at different periods. At one time the passive and at another the active graces of the Christian are called forth. At one season private exercises of godliness, and at another its public effects are excited and required. Winter leads the sap down to the roots, while Summer calls it up into the branches, and displays it in the blossoms and the fruit; and it is now Summer in the religious and the literary world, at all events in the two distinguished nations of the earth in which this book is making its wonderful way.

Admitting, as we perhaps must admit, that the more private and retired influence of religion in convents of their best days was superior to the devotion of the generality of modern Christians, we still avow with confidence, that modern Christians excel in public spirit and active zeal and charity. If it be said that these are qualities put forth by the Catholic advocates of convents, as well as the Protestant opponents of them, we answer that while the zeal and charity of the former are exclusive even to bitterness, these qualities in the latter are as expansive as the wants of mankind, as diffusive as the limits of the inhabited world. When the river spreads wide, or flows in various fertilizing currents, it cannot be expected to roll so deep. Even among Protestants of a century and half ago, and further back, we discover a strong propensity to exclusion, almost to the degree of the Catholic world; and if the Catholics had any of the glory of true devotion shining around them, it became excelled by the greater glory which encircled the heads of the recluse Puritans. At the same time, how little do we find even in them of the active and wide spreading benevolence exemplied by the best men of modern times. Their own souls—their own families—their own particular churches—these drew forth their concern, while it too much narrowed and restricted it. But the present day exhibits a remarkably altered scene; and from a thousand public assemblies, convened for the very purpose, and evincing their sincerity and fervency by their sacrifices and efforts, we hear the exclamation—"Let the whole earth be filled with His glory."

These reflections were perfectly in accordance with the object which Miss Reed strives, by the seasonable publication of her striking little work, to accomplish. Did the Catholics of America and England, to say nothing of those of other countries, fall in completely with this altered state of society, and strive by open and public efforts alone to diffuse their system and multiply their proselytes, all would be well. But in addition to such efforts they are aiming to perpetuate, or rather to revive, the very worst parts of a system which they are constrained to acknowledge has for ages, if not centuries, been declining in public favour. In addition to public efforts, as zealous as any that are made by Protestants, though much more Sectarian, they are privately endeavouring to fill the convents with inmates, after striving with too much success to multiply the number of those worse than doubtful institutions. All the priests of America and England could not have effected one quarter of the advantage which the Papal system has recently gained in these countries, had it not been for this simultaneous movement of private and public zeal. A recent writer informs us that whereas in America somewhat more than forty years ago, there was only one Romish church; there are now twelve Catholic sees, and a Catholic population of six hundred thousand, worshipping in about four hundred churches. Could this vast increase, so far beyond the ratio advance of inhabitants in the United States, have taken place without the exercise of an influence much more powerful than an open and candid appeal to the judgment of the people by public discourses and printed arguments?

This success will the less surprise every reader who considers the great influence of females, especially religious females, in society, and who remembers that this is the sex for which the institutions now denounced and deplored are very chiefly established. For one individual of the other sex induced to spend his days in the seclusion of a monastery, one hundred females may be found willing or constrained to enter the precincts of a convent. When we call to mind the power which mothers have over their children, in connection with the depth and strength of the impressions made upon them at that early and tender age, it is impossible not to look with fearful apprehension on any material increase of establishments tending to remove the rising race of females from society, and accustom them to habits utterly unfitting for domestic life. This must even be felt in reference to such as may be expected, after a conventual course, to forfeit their rash and early vows, and enter the state for which God and nature designed them. With reference to the rest, who either spend their lives in seclusion, or emerge with a determination to adopt as few of the maxims and manners of general society, even of a Christian character, as possible, we entertain a different set of feelings; at the same time feelings involving even greater regret, that the fairest portions of God's image on earth should be marred and rendered almost totally useless by mistaken notions of his own will.

To return to Miss Reed's publication, and the credit to which that lady is entitled. Catholics of former ages, and in countries which, so far as religion is concerned, they almost claim as their own, were seldom anxious to refute or to answer any one who might happen to impugn their proceedings. But in such countries as England and the United States this silence is neither politic nor safe; and a work like Miss Reed's left unanswered to make its way in society, would be a dangerous foe to the Catholic system, especially to that mysterious department of it which she has witnessed and denounced. It is not often that, when answers are published to attacks like this, they are put forth by the individuals personally and immediately concerned in the affairs in question; some other scribe, well instructed in the mysteries of the system is generally employed, who discovers deep and sorrowful indignation that those whom he holds in such reverence for their superior wisdom and piety should be the objects of wanton assault. But in the present case, from its nature and peculiarities, it was necessary that the person most complained of—the Superior of the convent—should appear in her own defence, and step for once from her rigid seclusion into the arena of controversy.

This she has done; and at some future time we may possibly give to the public an edition of her little work. But at present we must confine our attention to Miss Reed, and while we examine her general claims to public confidence, must take some notice of what she advances in defence of her bold and approved assault. It must be manifest to every one that much was said by the Superior and the Bishop, when Miss Reed first entered the convent, tending apparently to leave her at perfect liberty to make her own deliberate choice. In some portions of the narrative those great and grave personages even seem to throw early discouragements in her way, and almost to dissuade her from becoming a recluse. How far this was done to prepare for such a contingency as her escape, and for the defence of the system against an attack like hers, every reader must judge. On a comparison of her early indulgence and the candour of her first treatment, with the gradual harshness she met with, and the severities she soon found practised on such as had been some time in the convent, we are constrained to infer that the Bishop and Superior had long been convinced of the necessity of such art to constrain young females of the present day to submit themselves to their control.

Feeble instruments, as they appear, have often been the occasion of great and important changes in society. Miss Reed, should she prosper, as she has to some extent already, in diminishing the influence of the system she denounces, is not the first female of obscure origin and slender resources and talents, whose efforts to overthrow tyranny and unmask bigotry and hypocrisy, have been crowned with signal success. Yet there is nothing in the face of the narrative which would imply her expectation of any great and important result. She is charged with an attempt to destroy the Benedictine convent, and it is quite possible that her book may lead to its ultimate dissolution: but nothing like a design or a hope of this sort appears in the book itself; and in a statement since published in defence of the work she expressly disclaims all such motives in publishing it.

Supposing the narrative respecting Miss Mary Magdalene to be correct, what must be said of the cold and heartless cruelty with which that meek creature was treated. Unless the Superior is prepared with something more direct and circumstantial than a fierce and flat denial of the whole affair, to repel this part of Miss Read's accusation, no doubt can be entertained of this alone going very far towards bringing down the public indignation upon the system generally as well as the institution in particular.

In a supplement to Miss Reed's Narrative there is a passage in which she is represented as accounting in a very rational manner for her first disposition to enter the convent, and in which, also, she candidly disclaims all intention to injure that institution, except as a plain statement of facts experienced and witnessed by herself may have that tendency. "I have never wished to conceal that I was no doubt mistaken in thinking a romantic spirit, and the grief and affliction which followed the death of my mother, were a religious zeal for seclusion from the world. My feelings have from infancy been easily affected, and in going into the convent as I did, every one must see that I was influenced more by imagination than by judgment. I now wish others, who may be influenced as I was by false views of things, to understand the real nature of convents. I am sure I have only told what took place there, and have in no case exaggerated it. If what takes place in a convent ought to be approved, and induce Protestants to send their children there, then I have done nothing that could injure it, but would help it with the public. I would merely ask whether, if what I saw and heard was wrong, and yet was concealed from the public by the community, I have done wrong in telling it in the manner I have, and in allowing it to be published, after my name was brought before the public in order to condemn me. This reflection relieves my mind from the pain I should otherwise feel at the reproaches of the Superior in her answer. I do not feel that I have deserved them. While I was at the convent at first, my imagination was wrought up to the highest pitch; and believing the Roman Catholic to be the only true religion, I was zealous to persuade all others to embrace it; but I never wished to take a cross, and go through the streets of Boston, making known the true faith, as the Superior represents. I believe my friends will admit that I never, on any occasion, conducted, or wished to conduct myself in that manner."

It appears that one great inducement to Miss Reed's early determination to enter a convent, was her accidental intercourse with a French gentleman, of the name of Rodique, who boarded at the house of a married sister whom she was in the habit of visiting at Boston. She candidly confesses that "he had much influence on her mind in inducing her to join the Catholics." He seems to have met her in another Catholic family she was accustomed to visit—to have resorted to her father's, to give her instruction in the principles of the Catholic faith and discipline—to have adopted some questionable methods to preserve her attention fixed on what he deemed an important object—and to have done all this in the face of a knowledge that her father and family were adverse to any change in her religion. It is scarcely to be wondered that a naturally romantic and susceptible mind should, under such tuition, and immediately on the death of her mother, have turned her affections towards a convent—especially as her dying parent appears to have left this as her last request, that if she could discover any other church more holy than the Protestant, she would unite herself to it." She thought the Papal church more holy, and acted accordingly.

The officious interference of M. Rodique is a sample of the minute, individual, incessant zeal, exerted by Catholics of all classes and countries, to increase, if but by one insignificant individual, proselytes to their community. Very seldom would it be found that a Protestant gentleman of any denomination, accidentally lodging at a citizen's house, would take much pains, or any pains at all to convert a young and experienced relation of his hostess to the peculiarities of his own faith. But here we have a Catholic gentleman, availing himself of the first intimation that a young Protestant girl might be induced to become a convert to Popery, if not, industriously endeavouring to excite the first disposition towards such a change in her immature mind!

This conduct was the more reprehensible as well as remarkable on account of the studied secresy with which it proceeded to its purpose. The father of Miss Reed, it is incidentally admitted, knew of his visits to his daughter, and disapproved of them ; while he either feared or felt himself unable to prevent them. M. Rodique was a lodger, and we believe a boarder, at the house of the married daughter, and he might hesitate to do any thing that should offend him. At all events, though he once threatened to forbid him the house, if not turn him out of it, he never appears to have adopted either the milder expedient or the more formidable extremity. But even these visits were unknown to the sister of Miss Reed, at whose house the officious emissary dwelt; and though in his conversation with her and her husband, the subjects of Catholicism and convents often arose, he was cautiously silent about them in reference to their young and romantic sister.

Now what would be said, even by such an one, of a Protestant gentleman thus searching out the retreats of a young girl, and keeping his movements as secret as possible from those who were likely to prevent them? No imputation beyond a religious motive ever seems to have been entertained against this Catholic zealot ; and yet such conduct, had he been a Protestant, would scarcely have failed to bring down upon him the reproach, the execration, due to a purposed seducer—even though he had pleaded zeal for the conversion of the object of his pursuit to the important peculiarities of his creed, and observances of his religious worship. Another ingenious device employed by the Bishop (Fenwick, we believe, was his name), to proselyte this young female, must not be passed over. It should be observed that she had an elder sister already with the Catholics, named, either in her first Protestant or her second Popish baptism, Theresa, after the patroness saint of the order to which she belonged: and this circumstance must have greatly encouraged both the Bishop and his agent M. Rodique to hope that another of the family might yield to their sway. In this hope the Bishop obtained—likely through his lay friend's influence with the family—an interview with Rebecca. Then he addressed her in terms of solemn admonition, which she knowledges very deeply impressed her conscience and heart, and in parting with her, said—"We shall make a good Catholic of you,"—lending her two volumes containing a *Tale*, with which the Catholic peculiarities of faith and worship were artfully blended. These volumes were almost immediately taken back to the Bishop by Mr. Pond, her sister's husband—a circumstance that goes far to prove that the *Novel* they contained was not deemed quite proper for a young girl to read. Very reluctantly did she consent to their being returned.

Even these devices, however, skilful as they were, would in all probability have failed, but for an early and avowed predisposition to Popery and to a convent life in Rebecca's mind. On the other hand, we cannot wonder that, having heard of this disposition, and the frank and public avowal of it, the Bishop should make the usual effort of his fraternity to gather this simple unsuspecting lamb into the Catholic fold. But who can overlook the character stamped on this system of proselytism, by the almost infancy of the age, amidst which even a Bishop and an elderly lay gentleman deem it their duty to beat up for recruits. Did we find them labouring in their vocation exclusively, or chiefly among those whose years enable them to judge for themselves, and to embrace with calm deliberation, if they embrace at all, the mysterious discipline of the Romish church, little of animadversion would be left for a critic of their proceedings to publish. These grave personages, however, in despair of success among adults, are seen casting their baits among mere children; and by craft, when they cannot do it by force, removing them from parental control, shutting them up in a prison, and interposing their assumed authority between them and all their natural protectors, and their most faithful and affectionate friends. All efforts to render others religious and moral are best made at an early age.

> "Children like tender osiers take the bow,
> And as they first are fashioned always grow."

But the efforts before us are made to change the religion of children, and that at the expense of at least one branch of moral obligation—to the breach at least of one precept of the moral law—the one standing at the head of the second table, and what is emphatically called *the first commandment with promise* —"Honour thy father and mother." Such efforts should, in all candour and conscience, be reserved for an age in which parental authority is about to cease, and the individuals assailed are becoming masters of their own judgment as well as persons.

In the narrative of Miss Reed's seclusion, mention is frequently made of Mary Francis, thus named after she entered the convent; but before known as Miss Kennedy, and spoken of in an early part of the volume as having moved from Boston, on the arrival of a domestic at the house of Rebecca's father in search of her. We have read certain letters of this young lady addressed to Miss Reed, never intended for publication, but which the latter has been constrained to publish in her own defence against the reproaches of the lady St. George, the Superior of the convent. There is not only an apparent breach of confidence here on the part of Miss Reed, but she becomes by this act the instrument—a reluctant one she confesses —of exposing her young friend to the Superior's vengeance—if such an evil emotion can find place in the devout bosom of a lady Abbess.

"Tantæne animis cælestibus iræ ?"

We are not anxious either wholly to justify, or severely to censure this part of Miss Reed's conduct. The sufferings of Mary Francis in the convent, like her own, had already been great, and could scarcely be increased by any further infliction of the Superior's anger or malice. But this anger and malice always appear to have been completely under the control of a mind of singular potency and policy. The Superior could behave towards her pupils, whenever she pleased, and it would better her chief purpose, with well dissembled kindness and great condescension of manners; and the probability is, that this more gentle and winning character became assumed towards Miss Kennedy, the better to sustain the trembling reputation of the convent amidst the storm which Miss Reed was evidently able to raise against it. There is reason to believe that Miss Kennedy, on the appearance of her letters, was removed to another convent, if not afterwards to a third. Her name, too, was changed from Mary Francis to Mary Paulina—for what motive the reader must judge, and with what success may be inferred when it is known that her parents were Catholics, and therefore not only disposed to approve of her treatment, but also to acquiesce in these pious artifices to deceive the public respecting her.

Miss Kennedy writes like a good Catholic as well as a friend to Miss Reed. Her admission of what was wrong in the convent is an admission of abuse of what in itself she considers perfectly right. "Do not"—she says—"let anything you have seen disgust you with our holy religion." "Has not our Lord said that scandals must come? can ought but a good thing be abused, or a holy thing profaned." "Forgive me for presuming to preach; I am so anxious for you to make the best use of your sufferings." "May they make you more pleasing to the divine Saviour of mankind." "You have, my dear Agnes, unfastened the golden link which rivets, more closely than any other, soul to soul and heart to heart; but you are still loved and interesting to me. Oh, dear one, what has during these few months made such sad ravages in your heart. Reflect on your observation to me, 'I am convinced that the Catholic religion is the only true one.' Can you bury in oblivion this your own fervent protestation? and also the happy moments passed before that religion's hallowed altars? Have you abandoned it because you found crime and deceit in some of its professors and in some of its ministers? Was not one of the chosen apostles of our Divine Redeemer a traitor? Did not our Lord say, 'scandals must come?' Come, where? In the church, undoubtedly."

A remark or two on these extracts. The letters from which they are made are deemed by Miss Reed's Protestant friends remarkably confirmatory of all her charges of severity against the Superior, and of abuses and cruelties in the convent. We confess we see no such confirmation in them. We should have believed Miss Reed's charges to the full without them, and perhaps our faith in her plain statement would even have been more implicit. We do not mean that they weaken our confidence in her special accuracy any more than in her general integrity; but they put so sacred a construction on her sufferings—they throw such an air of mystery and even sublimity over the scene of her trials—they evince so profound an attachment to the institution amidst all its abuses—they show so clearly what one young person may revile as in itself evil, another may advocate as only sustaining occasional evil abuse,—that we are inclined to think Miss Reed's friends, and that young lady herself, would have done her cause quite as much good by withholding as by publishing them.

It is also next to impossible for us to look over these letters and not ask—*Is not the hand of Joab in all this?* May not even the Superior's influence, if not the Bishop's aid, be detected in most of what Miss Francis writes? The fine turns of expression which the letters contain—the clever appeals they make to Miss Reed's judgment and conscience as well as heart—the vague indefinite language in which some abuses are admitted—the opening left for a stranger to infer that these abuses regarded the system of Popery generally rather than convents in particular—the insinuations that while the Catholic religion admits abuse, *as the purest system on the face of the earth*, its conventual holy places furnish a retreat from the danger, and involve no other suffering than what is calculated to obviate the far worse evil of sinning,—these go far towards convincing us that whatever apprehensions the chiefs of the convent entertain from Miss Reed's statement, they cherish not a moment's fear from the letters of her more Catholic and consistent friend.

This view of her letters, however, enhances the indignation with which we contemplate the discipline of these nurseries of superstition. They are not conducted and controlled by ignorant zealots who know not what they do; but by shrewd and discerning politicians, who are capable of turning almost every incident into an occasion of defence. Their motto is—The end justifies the means: and having given their end the most exalted character—having settled the point, at least with themselves, that their system is infallible and divine—they stop at no expedient however crafty, they withhold no effort however humiliating and censurable, to advance a cause paramount to every other upon earth. Their settled duty to God is, the furtherance of the Catholic religion; and to man is, his conversion to this religion and this furtherance of it; and to these two branches of what they deem divine and infallible legislation, all human connections and courtesy, propriety and feeling, give way, and they boast of an honourable victory in triumphing over and trampling upon them.

Another resort for sustaining the integrity of Miss Reed, and the fidelity of her evidence against the convent, has been made by her friends. Sometime before she entered it, she had been at a school in Boston, under the care of two sisters, whose names do not appear further than in their initials—the Misses S——. There can be no doubt of their respectability as superintendants of an accredited and talented seminary, and also as members of the Episcopal Church in Boston, of which the Rev. Dr. Crossewell is the esteemed pastor. It is to be regretted that the instruction of Miss Reed in this school was restricted to embroidery and needle-work, for which she had a superior taste, and in which she became an acknowledged proficient. A little volume is now before us which says that "she was particularly expert in making lace, then much in fashion; but while under the care of the Misses S——, she took no lessons except in needle-work."

This, we repeat, is to be regretted. It is acknowledged that "she was far from being ignorant; appearing as intelligent as most young ladies of her age, and always conversed with correctness and propriety. Her mind"—the volume goes on to say—"appeared very capable of improvement." Why, then, we naturally ask, was not her mind improved in this Protestant school, and by teachers so capable of effecting the desirable and easy work? why was it left in its imperfect incipient state to receive its improvement, if such it might be called, in a Catholic seminary, and through the discipline of a convent? Why was this tender sapling removed from a garden of free air, in which it already grew and flourished, to be transplanted to a foreign forcing house amidst all manner of stunted, and crooked, and useless exotics? "She often expressed a wish," we are told, "to enter the convent that she might *complete her education.*" Now, without putting any bar upon her entering a convent, when she came of an age to form an enlightened and deliberate judgment, let us ask why did not her numerous and zealous friends somehow contrive to let her *education be completed* before her entrance, and thus give her the chance, at least, of choosing not to enter at all?

The testimony of these Protestant sisters, whose tuition of Miss Reed was so strangely limited to manual ingenuity, to the neglect of intellectual studies, and so far as it appears even of religious lessons, expressly confirms all that has been said of the influence of M. Rodique over her mind in favour of Catholicism. This gentleman, they acknowledge, "met her at their house at the time she was talking of going into the convent, and proposed to introduce her to the Bishop!" Nay, he appears to have taken her from their house to the Bishop's residence!!

We should not lay the stress we do on these circumstances, were not the ladies volunteers among those who rejoice in her escape from the convent, who testify in favour of her charges against it, and thus far appear on the stage as adversaries of the institution. We applaud their zeal in all this; but why did their zeal slumber so much and so long at an earlier period, when they ought to have been awake and active in preventing the six months suffering that Miss Reed underwent, to say nothing of the Catholic reproach that will now follow her to the grave, and perchance somewhat hasten her arrival there. They pleaded, indeed, for her being allowed to take her Bible and prayer-book with her into the convent; but when told that her prayer-book must not accompany her, and that she must have no other than the Catholic version of the Bible, they discover no emotion, they make neither opposition nor protest. Nay, they seem wantonly or wilfully to neglect an opportunity peculiarly favourable for changing her mind and arresting her progress. Her first intercourse with the Bishop was not satisfactory to herself. "She was not pleased with his conversation;" and "she appeared less disposed to go to the convent after that interview than she had done before." What a favourable juncture this for a strong and united remonstrance from her Protestant friends! What a tide in her affairs which they might have taken at the flood! where was Dr. Crosswell all this time, when M. Rodique and the Bishop were so near at hand and ready for action?

We ask these questions more in sorrow than in anger, and with the purpose of warning other parents and teachers, other patrons and friends, of young females who are exposed to the insidious snares of Popery, either from the restless vigilance of its emissaries, or the romantic disposition of their own minds. The entire affair before us shews, what must often have appeared on other evidence before our readers, that Catholic ceremonies and sentiments have a remarkable tendency to impress in their favour, minds of this cast. In Protestant countries we daily witness the effect of religious display and parade on such persons, and how much more powerful is *their* attraction than that of the simple and solemn performance of Christian worship! In Protestant and enlightened England, what multitudes are attracted by public meetings and platform exhibitions, and how delighted they are with those parts of the checquered affair in which the ridiculous forms the nearest possible coalition with the sublime! Urge them more frequently to attend the usual week-night services of their several ministers, and they will plead their want of time; but let some more novel and exciting scene be advertised, at another and distant place of worship, and time can easily be found for attendance an hour earlier and two hours later! Moreover, money can be spared for the collection, and every kind of sacrifice can be endured for the sake of witnessing the show and listening to the speeches of such an occasion, by multitudes who have no sympathy with their own dear deserted minister, and no taste for his plain, week-night sermons and prayers!

Is the success of Catholic zeal, then, a matter of wonder in present day in England any more than in America—in London any more than in Boston and Charlestown? Can we be surprised at the rapid increase and effect of that zeal, amidst a people so well prepared for its meretricious embrace by the weak inventions of the Protestant folly? Are we astonished to hear that so many, trained for the natural transit at a gay and noisy Protestant chapel, not a hundred miles from Finsbury, should so eagerly pass over to the still more pompous and enchanting temple that modern Popery has furnished, to receive and welcome such butterfly saints? A most remarkable instance of this Protestant Popery, if we may thus associate terms of sworn opposition, took place in a city distinguished by its enlightened institutions and inhabitants, a few years ago. It is not mentioned here with any other motive than to confirm the truth of what has been advanced, and illustrate the views which are taken of the tendency of much that takes place in Protestant assemblies to further the Catholic cause.

An impostor of singular attractions in person, costume, and speech, gained access to several respectable families as the heir of a noble title and estate; which have since, by the death of the then possessor, descended to their rightful expectant. His public addresses, first from the balcony of his hotel, and afterwards in almost every public room of the city in which he had taken up his temporary abode, created such an interest in his favour, that a large portion of the constituency hailed with rapture his announcement at the eve of a general election, to become a candidate for the representation, in opposition to two excellent numbers, who expected to be returned for the third time without opposition. While his popular talents and speeches, with a large share of assumed philanthropy and seeming condescension of manner, gained him several thousand followers among the lower orders, no small number of religious and respectable persons of all denominations, were delighted with his warm avowals of attachment to religion; and some were even willing to make any sacrifice in their power for his advancement to the very head of the political and religious institutions of the place.

Among his admirers was a lady who conducted a respectable boarding school, and who had deemed it an honour to receive a poor child under her protection, which he had just before, for some reason of his own, thought fit to receive as his own *protegé.* The little girl was placed among her scholars, and the patron was always a welcome visiter at the school. In fact, he became the idol of the institution, and the venerated friend of its respectable conductress. Special and extraordinary visits were at length arranged, and one took place marked with peculiar importance, not only by its religious character, but by the solemn preparations that preceded, and the novel scenes and ceremonies that attended it. A central seat was elevated and adorned for the distinguished guest; and report says that a splendid canopy was placed over it. On either side, but on a level with the floor, were chairs tastefully arranged for the governess and her mother, on the left and right hand of the presiding genius of the evening; and for their inferior visitors and the teachers of the school, on the right and left of them. The other parts of the room were occupied in most admired order by the several scholars and their young friends; while the young protegé, beautifully dressed, was placed on an ottoman the feet of her illustrious benefactor and adopted father, who was saluted by his assumed title of Sir William, and congratulated as an expectant earl! Before him was a handsome table, an elegant cushion, and a superb Bible; and after the refreshments of tea and coffee, he delivered addresses and offered prayers, which were listened to with more profound attention and fervent applause, than any one of the forty clergymen of the city ever received. What ceremonies or amusements followed, beyond a little sacred and profane singing, we are not with certainty informed. Rumour spoke, at the time, of a dance, but we mention it as a rumour, and not as a reality.

And why have we described the scene at all? Not certainly to dwell upon, still less to rejoice over, the fate of the individual thus exalted and honoured. The assumed Sir William was soon after convicted of swindling and perjury, and escaped transportation by a successful plea of insanity; which has, however, given him a place in a lunatic asylum, at least for the period of his intended transportation, and perchance for life. But the scene is described for the purpose of admonition and remonstrance. Where there is a disposition among Protestants, and Protestants of education and respectability, to make on any occasion this use of their religion—this parade of a system whose motto is that *the kingdom of Christ is not of this world*—are not all the young people, especially the young females, who witness such scenes, and behold their parents and teachers, and even pastors, delighted with them, more than prepared at the first opportunity, if not to enter a convent, to become members of the holy and infallible community of Rome?

To return, perhaps for the last time, to our first subject. Miss Reed's narrative is said to have acquired a vast and increasing circulation in America, and it will no doubt be very generally read in this country. Let it be so—not merely or chiefly to remunerate our spirited publisher, or the publishers of any other edition, for their cost and care; but, above every other consideration, to render the fair authoress as general a benefit as she can become to the rising age of the Protestant world. Her primary object appears to have been the justification of her conduct in clandestinely escaping from the convent; and the purpose of her friends, in the support they have come forward to give to her testimony and character, is chiefly the refutation of what they deem the selfish and slanderous answer which her narrative provoked from the Superior. But let our principal purpose, in giving a British circulation to these interesting facts, and those by which we are aiming to illustrate them, be the benefit of those churches, and families, and individuals, to whom we are united by a common bond of

Protestant sentiment and feeling. Far, very far, let our thoughts be removed from the least intention to inflame the public mind—already, perhaps, too much heated—against the Superiors or subordinates, the priests or the people, of Catholic churches. But this evil may be shunned without proceeding to the other extreme of indifference to the danger of Protestant youth, especially of the weaker sex, from the restless ambition of a once rampant, but now fallen hierarchy, to substitute in their warm affections the traditions of men for the undefiled gospel of "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords." For let it never be lost sight of, that the contest between the Romish church and the various evangelical communities which protest against it, is not one of mere circumstance and ceremony—of mere discipline and authority—but of religious principle, of sacred and essential truth. The foundation of Popery and the faith of Papists stand, not in the power of God, but in the wisdom of men—not in the merits of Christ, but in the works and virtues of those who borrow in order to blaspheme his name—not in the blood of the covenant, but in the penances and prayers of those who profess indeed to be his disciples, but deny him the glory of their purification and redemption. Without attributing to Catholics the absurd and besotted idolatry which the objects they bow before would seem to deserve for them, it is sufficient to support the charge of their departure from the true faith of the gospel, and the spiritual worship of God, that they claim in any sense and in any degree a merit for human doings, superadded to, or independent of, the merit of Christ—"His obedience unto death, even the death of the cross." There is no such thing in existence. The thought is exploded in scripture, and the assumption in whatever form must be abhorrent to all right christian feeling.

Specious advocates for convents have pleaded thus—"The works performed in those retreats of piety, at all events, bear no resemblance to the pharisaic works censured by our Lord, which were wrought ostentatiously *to be seen of men.*" Still they may partake, and we fear do partake, of the fullest essence of a self-righteous character, being done for a purpose, if possible, more adverse to Christian principles, and therefore more displeasing to God, than ostentation and display—to propitiate divine favour and purchase heavenly blessedness. Those whose religion ostentatiously invites the public gaze, and whose chief object is human approbation and applause, excite pity for their weakness and vanity, and are finely satirized and dismissed by the only encouragement that divine liberality can bestow upon them—"Verily, I say unto you, ye have your reward." But those take more presumptuous ground, and are guilty of greater impiety, who conclude that, by an ingenious system of penance and seclusion, they can either effect that for themselves which the death of Christ alone accomplishes, or can add by their own sacrifices to the value and virtue of his atoning death.

Such efforts to expiate human guilt, and mortify the passions of a corrupt nature, supposing them to be approved or tolerated by God—which is impossible—have no utility, and consequently no moral worth, as public examples tending to the general good. The ostentatious self-righteous man may, in many respects, be a useful one in society. While the principles of his conduct are concealed and do no injury, his actions may do considerable good—often more good from the forward zeal with which they are multiplied and forced as it were on the public attention. But the system of monastic seclusion, while its presumption and self-confidence are offensive to God, has none of the subordinate qualities of utility among men. Nay, it robs society of the benefit which all personal religion is designed, and adapted, and required to render; while its only relative effect is, from its very nature and necessary operation, painfully injurious, in promoting some of the worst feelings in both the governing and governed towards each other—inducing the one to a severity at variance with both christian and natural feeling, and the other to resistance and reluctant compliance whenever resistance would not prevail or dare not appear.

This is remarkably manifested from the first to the last of Miss Reed's narrative. The six months of her conventual life was one continued contest, more or less in action, between her and those to whom in an evil moment she had yielded up the control of her conscience and conduct. Nor was the evil confined to her—who soon felt the yoke too heavy for her to bear, and resolved on an early escape from the intolerable thraldom;

but it appears in a more affecting form in the private complaints of her less resisting companions—in their secret sighings and murmurings, who had not the hope and dared not cherish the wish to escape from the melancholy prison-house. In these less courageous and more submissive disciples, we see another evil tendency of the system, not elicited and experienced, at least for any length of time, by Miss Reed. She early broke the yoke and burst the bonds asunder, and now appeals openly to the world for the justification of her conduct; but they privately complain of hardships and cruelties which they have not the courage to surmount and scarcely the conscience to disapprove. Without charging them with direct hypocrisy, in professing to submit with Christian patience to what their heart and soul must sometimes think strange, if not evil, it is enough to show that they are restless and unhappy—that, however they may be striving to "learn of Him who was meek and lowly in heart," they are far from feeling the yoke they wear as *His* to be *easy*, or the *burden* they are told *He* imposes upon them to be *light*.

We look on these, and other moral evils that wider space would enable us to record, as some of the worst tendencies of the system which we cordially unite with Miss Reed in denouncing. At the same time, it is impossible to be silent on the pernicious influence which the education of Protestant children in Catholic schools must have on their present and future religious character. The writer of these pages has witnessed, in different parts of Europe, what the American friends of Miss Reed apprehend is widely diffusing its baneful consequences in that country. He has seen, in France and Flanders especially, the modern *rage*, as it may be called, of Protestant parents for the education of their sons in the colleges and their daughters in the convents of the Romish church. At Bruges, Ghent, and St. Omer especially, he found large numbers of Protestant English children availing themselves, under their parents' sanction, of these opportunities, and thus, for the sake of a good French education, resigning at once all their native patriotic and Protestant feelings. To attend the routine of such schools, and not imbibe daily and hourly the very spirit of the religion they are established to propagate, is impossible. Either, therefore, our Protestant countrymen and countrywomen are indifferent to what religious character their children acquire, or they calculate too confidently on their ability to counteract, in after life, youthful prepossessions in favour of popery.

Can it be expected that the Superiors of these establishments will forego their favourite ceremonies? or that they will allow exemptions and innovations at variance with the assumed pre-eminence of their system? or that they will neglect the opportunities thrown in their way by thoughtless Protestants, who have not the same zeal for their peculiarities, and often no zeal at all, of adding to their converts? What then is the consequence? The children thus transferred become regular attendants on the singular frequency of Catholic worship, and thus early converts to the system; or, after six days attendance on weekly ceremonies, they spend the sabbath with their parents, either in the total neglect of all religious worship, at which they are taught to shudder, or being allowed one reluctant attendance on a Protestant service, always cold enough in England, and on the continent proverbial for its heartless formality and its worldly indifference!

Here the reader is conducted most unwittingly to a prolific spring of the evil now deplored. If human ingenuity had tasked itself to devise a plan for exhibiting Protestantism in an unpopular light, it could not have succeeded better than our countrymen, both lay and clerical, have done in their ecclesiastical arrangements. More dull uninteresting services of a religious nature never were witnessed, than those of the English in the several continental towns in which they congregate. It has been matter of some surprise that French vivacity could ever tolerate the dull music of Catholic worship—that a people so volatile, and fond of the liveliest airs and movements in all other places, can listen for hours together to the droning monotonous tones of the best cathedral choirs. But in the English churches there is no music at all; neither instrument nor voice is heard in the praise of God; nor is there anything else adapted to kindle in the bosom a single spark of appropriate cheerful devotion.

Contrasted with these lifeless services, Catholic churches all around present scenes of stirring attraction to the eye, if not to the ear, and young persons especially, are not backward in acknowledging the difference, nor anxious to forego seasons of cheap and welcome excitement, for the mere sake of perpe tuating a formal respect for the religion of their own country. Through this cause alone, not a few English young ladies residing on the continent annually become decided and acknowledged converts to the Romish church; and many more renounce Protestant services altogether, and, if they observe public worship at all, observe it in a Catholic temple.

Aware of this continued chance of winning our children "to the obedience of *their* faith," Catholic priests, in towns to which English families resort, are ever on the watch. Without improper motives, every one on the spot must observe them evincing a politeness of behaviour, joined with official zeal and vigilance, which Protestant ministers would do well in a better cause to imitate. The writer of these pages resided in a large French city about twelve months, for the improvement of his two daughters in the language, and he had occasion to notice the watchful temper of the priesthood in this respect. His younger daughter, a mere child, heard much from her French teacher, of the excellence of a certain young priest, who, in fact, was universally esteemed by Protestants as well as Catholics. The teacher also had spoken to him of what she was pleased to call her favourite pupil. A respectful message was one day delivered by the teacher from the priest, requesting that on her next visit to his house her little scholar might be allowed to accompany her. The child herself was anxious to go, and was highly delighted with his addresses and presents. She has now been some time in England, but continues to speak with rapture of her reception at the house of Monsieur M——. Nor can her parents forego this opportunity of bearing their testimony in his favour. They are persuaded that he never would have sanctioned the severity of which Miss Reed complains, and would have been the first to lift up his voice against the cruelties inflicted on Miss Mary Magdalene.

Here, some will plead, there is the greater danger: and that families are more safe from innovation amidst evils like those which Miss Reed has exposed in America, than from the more plausible and pleasant way chosen by the French to effect the same purpose. Supposing this to be admitted, the duty of Protestant families in defeating that purpose is, to imitate the amenity of our European neighbours, rather than retaliate on the harshness and inhumanity of the Catholics of the new world. While caution and restraint, to promote our childrens' fidelity to the Protestant faith, are conducted with a temper like that which marked Monsieur M——s efforts to conciliate them in favour of Popery—while they are unallied with the bitterness and unstained by the vice, which are bad enough in Catholic, but worse in Protestant zealots—such caution and restraint cannot be exercised with too much vigilance and wisdom, too much decision and perseverance.

In this light Miss Reed's interesting narrative will bear the strictest investigation. It is not a recompensing evil for evil. It is not measuring to the Catholics the measure which they have too often been ready to mete to the Protestants. Her candid admission of all the good treatment she received, and her equally candid admission of the respect and even reverence, with which those young inmates of the convent who suffered much more than herself, returned to those who so cruelly treated them, shews a temper in this young writer vastly superior to that with which Catholic vices and crimes are too often recorded, especially by those who have suffered under them. The very worst thing we have heard spoken of Miss Reed—always excepting the vindictive and vituperative answer of her Superior—was a remark to this effect. "Perhaps this young lady was averse to remaining in an institution which would compel her to continue in single blessedness. Perhaps she had "examined well her blood," and discovered that she could not long "endure the livery of a nun;"

"For aye to be in a shady cloister mew'd,
To live a barren sister all her life,
Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon."

Perhaps she had identified herself with Milton's lady, and heard the fine and fascinating address of Comus—

"List, sister, be not coy, and be not cozen'd
With that same vaunted name virginity.
Beauty is nature's coin, must not be hoarded,
But must be current, and the good thereof
Consists in mutual and partaken bliss,
Unsavoury in th' enjoyment of itself;
If you let slip time, like a neglected rose
It withers on the stalk with languisht head."

Should this surmise of our heroine's motives be just, we will not censure her—we dare not cast either the first or the last stone upon her. To violate a vow—supposing her to have taken it—which is itself a violation of nature and religion—is a virtue to be extolled rather than a vice to be reproached and condemned. To assert the supremacy of the divine will—clearly intimated in creation—forming an essential part of the machinery of Divine Providence—and sanctified as well as sanctioned by every dictate and design of Christianity:—to assert the supremacy of the divine will, thus commended, over every edict of human authority, is acting a noble Christian part, which, however it may have a direct aspect on our own comfort, ought not to be laughed or frowned to silence, as though the selfish feature of it robbed it of all its goodness and beauty, and reduced it to a mere paltry subterfuge for individual private interest.

Should Miss Reed require support under such an insinuation, greater than this argument or argument of any kind can furnish, she may appeal to no less an example than the wife of Martin Luther—nay, to that of the great reformer himself. The young lady that he married—Catherine Boren—had been a nun, and had escaped from a Saxon convent; and Luther himself, by his marriage, especially with such a lady, gave pointedness and force to all his previous arguments against the Catholic law of monastic celibacy, which had then reached the consummation of its immoral abuses, as well as of its lofty pretensions to religious authority.

This accidental allusion suggests a few remarks on another feature of the *exposé* of Miss Reed. The most fertile source of moral evil is indolence, especially when it becomes systematic and secluded. It is on this account that great examples of vice as well as virtue are not so productive of imitation as might at first be expected. The fact is, there are hundreds that want energy, for one that wants ambition, and sloth has in this respect prevented vice in some minds as well as virtue in others. Idleness is the grand pacific ocean of life, and in that stagnant abyss the most salutary things often produce no good, and the most noxious no evil. Abstract vice, however, maybe and often is, engendered in idleness; though the moment it becomes efficient it must quit its cradle and cease to be idle. In monasteries and convents, therefore, all who admit our nature to be radically corrupt will expect to find the seeds and roots of evil to abound—to be feeble in their strength owing to a restricted mode of life, and the want of space for expansion and exercise—still to abound in luxury and variety.

Amidst this evil of monastic seclusion, there is no substantial good to compensate or counteract it. Admitting it to have some salutary influence on those who submit to it, "not by constraint but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but with a ready mind," that influence reaches not beyond a very narrow circle. There are undoubtedly some to be found in all ages and in most countries, who have experienced all the calm delight and satisfaction they expected and professed—whose feelings have been raised and kept above the world by perseverance in strict and solemn devotion—who have "sat in heavenly places," and have partaken of emotions and enjoyments beyond the power of language to describe. All this is possible, and by no means improbable.

But how narrow has been its widest range, and how insignificant its greatest influence on society. Private and secluded devotion is of infinite value as the main spring, the moving cause, of an active piety and a wide-spreading beneficence; but such piety as this—never coming forth into public action, and scarcely known by the mass of mankind to exist—is as restricted in its social influence, as it is productive of personal superstition, and surrounded and sustained by local corruption. Were this piety in itself as undefiled as its names and pretensions would imply—were it always the vestal inviolable devotion which it assumes to be—were it holy as the fires of heaven, whence alone it professes to be inspired and inflamed—its limited and concealed character would not be nicely weighed against it; but its evil accompaniments, so generally attending it as to prove almost essential to its existence, will always prevent its being held in very high reputation, and render an immense majority of the wise and good as averse to encourage it in others as to adopt it themselves. As in agriculture, he that can produce the greatest crop for himself is not the best farmer, but he that can render his crop the best at the least expense; so in the Christian church, they are not the most valuable members who can acquire for themselves the greatest good, but those who can accomplish this with the least admixture of concomitant ill. For let none presume to think that they can devise any plan of producing good unalloyed and unadulterated with evil. This is the prerogative of God alone.

Apart from the moral evils, more or less corrupting the best religion of convents, there are ridiculous customs and ceremonies which, to say the least, debase that religion, and tend, in the view of young converts to the system, to make it appear a perfect caricature of that sublime reality which the Scriptures render it. One of the pupils of the Boston convent thus describes its discipline in which Miss Reed's previous account is perfectly borne out. "The usual punishments of the school were making a young lady sit on the top of a high pyramid, or flight of steps, in a conspicuous place; putting their feet in the stocks, and kissing the floor. All these punishments I have seen in the school. The kissing the floor I particularly remember seeing in three cases. One case was my little sister, whose fault, I believe, was making up a face to a young lady. She was ordered to kiss the floor, and complied. Another was a niece of one of the teachers, a Catholic; and the third a little Protestant girl about six years old. These punishments were inflicted in the presence of all the school. Kissing the floor was understood to be one of the punishments to mortify those who had broken the rules."

One or two remarks on this quotation. It is acknowledged that such was the discipline of the convent school. It is, however, manifest that, so far as was practicable, it was the discipline of the entire convent. Its early exercise on the youngest scholars, Protestant as well as Catholic, was evidently intended to prepare them, in the event of their re-entering or remaining in the convent as religieuses, for submission either to the same rules, or to rules still more ridiculous and severe. A second remark suggested by the quotation regards the powerful hold which, with all its known evils, the system must have held of the good opinion of surrounding parents. This young lady acknowledges that she "went there with reluctance, because her elder sister, who had been a pupil for a long time, had left it several times, and came home much dissatisfied; but her friends persuaded her to return!" Yet, amidst this dissatisfaction and these escapes of an elder daughter, and the consequent and natural reluctance of a second daughter to enter the forbidding place, not only did the latter enter and continue there three months longer than Miss Reed, but a younger sister also was sent to kiss the floor, in token of her subjection to a scholastic plan, as absurdly redundant in punishments, as it was glaringly deficient in imparting sound tuition in letters, morals, or piety. Such was the infatuation of parents in favour of the convent, that their children were thus successively forced into it, and compelled to remain, notwithstanding they themselves were forbidden to witness the manner in which they were treated. Thus stands the record of the same young lady:

"The whole time I was in the convent I never saw my friends anywhere except in the visiting parlour, which was separate from the school-room and from the community of nuns. No visitors on any occasion were allowed to go into the school-room. My sister and another lady once called expressly to see the school-room, but they were refused. The only persons I ever saw in the school-room, except the pupils, were the Superior and nuns, the Bishop frequently, two priests, Dr. O'Flaherty and Mr. Tyler, and I think one other priest, whose name I do not recollect. The school-room was sufficiently large to accommodate a number of visitors. The young ladies all knew that they could not invite their parents into the school-room on any occasion. I never knew any of the parents to visit either the sleeping rooms or the dining hall."

Nor is this all. There can be little doubt, not only that letters from their parents sometimes never reached the pupils, but that letters from the pupils were in greater numbers withheld from the parents. It was a rule of the convent for every pupil to write to her parents in the middle of every month; but as each letter thus written was placed unsealed in the hands of the Superior, much uncertainty prevailed about their being dispatched, and no small number never reached their destination. This young lady remarks, "It was against the rule to receive a letter which did not come through the Superior. It was understood that all letters to the pupils were opened and read by the Superior, before they reached the persons to whom they were addressed. It rested with the Superior whether any letters we had written should reach our friends or not."

This is sufficient, and we may now safely leave the fate of the convent, so far as we are concerned, in the hands of our readers. Our remaining remarks will be chiefly directed to the reproval of those errors of Protestant communities and Superiors, which approximate to those of the Catholic, and have a tendency to induce young persons to look on the latter with a favourable eye. We have spoken of English Protestant churches on the continent, and it is with sorrow that their intolerance, in conjunction with their utter want of zeal and fervour, is mentioned. Catholics, amidst their systematic lack of toleration, are able to point to their energy and ardour as some plausible counterbalance to the evil; while our Protestant countrymen are not only in point of devotion altogether in the frigid zone of christianity, but are intollerant as Catholics themselves —issue bulls as absolute, though not so authoritative, as those of the Pope—against all classes of dissenting heretics. We had hoped this spirit and practice were confined to England, while their prevalence are deeply to be deplored in a country boasting of its superior freedom and enlightenment. In Ireland it has long been abolishing. Protestant Episcopalians have there too much to fear from Popery not to value the alliance of their dissenting brethren. At the moment we were writing news has arrived that the Bishop of Londonderry publicly assisted at a recent collection in support of a new Wesleyan chapel in that city. Clergymen, however, who have passed the Straits of Dover have carried with them too much of the bigotry of their ultra brethren in England. None of the vices of Calais—and they are many—appear to disturb the quiet of the British clergyman of that city so much, as the existance and increase of a congregation or two of the very people, for whom his lordship of Londonderry volunteered his services as a public collector.

We fear, if this Calais clergyman had the power, he would extirpate his fellow Protestants, the Wesleyans, as promptly as ever the reformed Christians in France were dispersed by Papal authority in its most rampant ages. The vessels that crowd the ports of London and Liverpool are often in each other's way, and fierce disputes spring from their interfering; but let two of the same vessels meet in a foreign port, or on the bosom of the broad Atlantic, and they are refreshed and in raptures at the sight of each other. Thus the different Protestant churches crowded together in England may sometimes interfere to provoke one another to a little temporary displeasure and contention; but in France we should have thought the meeting of two or three to be an occasion of gladness, and that the Episcopal church, secure in its boasted ascendancy, would especially scorn to cherish a spark of envy or hatred. What must the Catholic witnesses of such a protestant spirit think? Another question, still more important to us, suggests itself—

what must be the effect of such a spirit among the rising age of English Protestants? We can answer this from personal observation. The Catholics are dividing with the world thousands of our emigrant youth; an effect which would be seen and felt to a much greater degree than it is, were a turn in public affairs to bring them over to England, while England is simultaneously providing Catholic chapels and convents too, to receive and shelter them.

While on this subject, the *soi disant* English bishop, whose cathedral was recently opened in Paris, claims a passing remark. The question is often heard in both countries—who is Bishop Luscombe, of whom we read so much and hear so often? and how did he reach the episcopal bench? Mystery has always something of the sublime about it; but the sublime of this mystery is very nearly allied to the ridiculous. Of Dr. Luscombe, personally and privately, we have not a syllable of disapprobation to utter. Of his pulpit talents and ministrations it is also a pleasure a speak. For these reasons, however, our surprise is greater at the means to which he stooped to acquire the mere name of Bishop, and to attach to his person the shadow of episcopacy. Not a member of the English or Irish bench would consecrate him; but there happened to exist an aged relic or two of departed episcopacy in Scotland, who were thought to retain the spirituality of the desired office, and to whom he applied to cause the little which they possessed—and more, of course, they could not impart—to descend upon his head. In spiritual things, therefore, Dr. Luscombe deems himself a bishop, and prefixes *right* reverence to his name,—properly omitting, however, to call himself a *lord* bishop, having no temporal authority, no baronial title, no seat in the House of Peers. He gratifies himself and his clergy in going about France and Belgium confirming a few English children; but beyond this he has no episcopal labour, authority, or responsibility whatever. He can neither license, nor consecrate, nor ordain. Even in the work of confirmation, his power has recently been limited by the personal exercise of higher and less doubtful authority. He has generally, though not universally, been received among the English in the *Whig* nations of France and Belgium; but in the *Tory* states of Holland, the Bishop of London has himself recently appeared, to preserve the children of that country from the imposition of hands not so determinately and amply qualified as his own.

Why are these things mentioned in this work? Because they are effecting in France the very evils it describes and deplores in America. Catholics are taking daily advantage of this burlesque of episcopal power, which they know and boast to have descended upon all the Protestant churches assuming it through their own more ancient and venerable hierarchy. This advantage has been furthered in no slight degree by the means which Bishop Luscombe has too often adopted to conciliate them. Among other expedients, he has adorned his person with a large splendid cross, and with the jewelled and sparkling appendage he has taken his confirming circuits; astonishing Catholic spectators that he should call himself a Protestant, and exciting among his Protestant friends considerable suspicion that he is so "in word and tongue" only, while he is a Papist "in deed and in truth."

But are emigrant Protestants alone responsible for the encouragement and success of Catholic zeal? Is no indirect sanction given to it at home by Protestants without, as well as within, the pale of the established church? Let us examine this point a little, and see whether successful proselytism among British Catholics is not sometimes to be laid at the door of British Protestants, and even British Protestant dissenters.

The paths of error are almost infinitely varied. When once we forsake the simplicity of the good old way, we are soon lost in the wanderings of a depraved imagination, or sunk in the corruptions of a deceitful heart. Neither the name of Protestant, nor the more refined name of Protestant dissenter, is a sufficient voucher for preservation from the spirit of Popery. Behind a Protestant mask the designing hypocrite will sometimes act a part, worthy of the darkest ages of Catholic superstition, and the worst errors of papal assumption and tyranny; and, beneath a Protestant dissenting garb, arch deceivers have studied and laboured through a long life to render others the tools and the victims of an ecclesiastical ambition, not surpassed by that of the proudest Gregorys and the most cruel innocents of ancient times.

That the present position, and much of the present proceeding, of the church of England, are favourable to the advance of Popery, and productive of considerable success to Catholic communities, no careful observer of the times can doubt. Discerning Catholics hail the lofty assumption of apostolicity, in episcopal charges, and in the sermons and other countless pamphlets of the superior and inferior clergy, as a flattering argument in their own favour. The more loudly the Protestant bench boasts of being successors of the apostles, the more confidence they inspire among Catholic titulars in the final success of their less doubtful claims to the title of the apostolic and universal church. In union with this assumption, proclaimed and paraded by the higher classes of British Protestants with more pomp than ever, must be viewed the increasing intolerance of every part of their behaviour towards Catholics—the spirit of persecution they are exciting in England, and especially in Ireland, against a people to whom they are indebted for almost everything belonging to them as a Christian church. A writer in a little volume called the "Wreath of Friendship," recently published, has the following just and forcible remarks—

"Professing, as they do, many of the leading principles of the Catholic religion under the name of Protestantism—descended, as they are, from Catholic ancestors, whom they acknowledge to have been Christians in as high a degree as themselves—adopting a liturgy translated from the Roman ritual and missal almost without a deviation—advocating the very spirit and essence of Popery in their notions of an apostolic priesthood, still invested in a Protestant church with the power of absolving from sin, and giving effect to a multitude of human ceremonies by their consecration and rank,—it might have been expected that, though separated by act of parliament from the see of Rome, they would still look on their holy mother with filial reverence and respect, and that in proportion to her age and infirmities. But no! The Catholic hierarchy has been spoiled of its possessions and splendour by the predominant hand of Protestantism; and the latter feels all the jealousy, and hatred, and dread, consequent on such a deed, and would resist to blood the least encroachment of the parent church, from which it derived its property, its priesthood, its prayers, yea, its very existence on the earth!"*

How far Protestant Episcopal worship, especially in our cathedrals, is adapted to preserve from Popery or increase its influence and importance, let the numerous young people tell us who have been seduced by the one to witness the greater novelty and splendour of the other. We are told that our children resort to modern Catholic churches as mere spectators, and not as converts and devotees. But the question is, not the motive of the first resort, but the consequence of frequently repeating it. Do none of them pass from the one character to the other? Are none of those, who stop short of practical conversion, constrained to look with quite as favourable an eye on Christianity through a Catholic as through a Protestant medium? Is it no evil consequence that they have been taught from the earliest period to consider cathedral ceremonies as legitimate expressions of Christian devotion? Can they be persuaded that there is so wide a difference in the character of churches, whose rites so nearly resemble each other, as to justify the one in holding the other in abhorrence—the modern and dominant church in so bitterly hating the far more ancient, though more feeble one?

Let us pass through the ranks of those who have seceded from the national establishment, and freely expose to public censure so much of the spirit of Popery as they have seen fit to retain. The dissent from the Catholic church which Protestantism, as such, set up in this kingdom, among others, at the Reformation, forms the first and best apology for those who prefer greater simplicity in doctrine, or discipline, or devotion, than the church of England has seen fit, for nearly three centuries, to adopt, in dissenting from that establishment, in such forms as their judgment and conscience best approve. Every one, however, must perceive the wide opening made by such secession for the entrance of new ecclesiastical rules and customs, which may become as repugnant to the spirit of the times, and as intolerable to those on whom they are gradually imposed, as the laws of the Protestant establishment or of the Popish hierarchy. If it be said that such rules must have had somewhat of a popular origin, and can only ask for voluntary obedience; it may be answered that Popery under Protestant governments, having no power to enforce obedience, courts nothing but voluntary favour. It is one remarkable sign of modern times that this system, shorn of all its ability to threaten and alarm, now begins, like other independent sections of the Christian church, to appeal to popular suffrage, and even summon the Scriptures in its defence. There is no considerable Catholic encampment in England, which does not thus occasionally strive to "lengthen its cords and strengthen its stakes;" and no little success has in some provinces attended this bold and novel effort.

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* "The Reconciliation—by Malcolm Campbell, Esq.," the first article in the "Wreath of Friendship" for 1836.

If, however, such success materially increase, it will chiefly be through the want of a thorough, genuine Protestant spirit in churches bearing this more modern and popular name. The glaring want of such a spirit in the establishment, is one chief cause of the public eye being turned with more than usual favour on both Irish and English Catholics; and it will be just in proportion as other Protestant churches recede from this intolerant example, that they may expect to preserve themselves from the successful inroads of Popery.

In the first place, let the Wesleyan church, beyond all doubt the holiest community in Christendom, look to this. It has set a noble example of passive meekness, and active benevolence, through almost a century of unmerited reproach, and no little share of personal annoyance and persecuting cruelty. And whence has it been thus assailed? From that high church, and ultra Protestant class which is now, in an hour of peril and fear, courting Wesleyan favour, and striving to inflame this "respected and influential body," which it is now discovered to be, against Catholics and dissenters! Here is its greatest danger. There is no fear of its ever resenting the monstrous treachery, with which its recent and most bitter enemies now flatter its power, and solicit its aid. If the hallowed principle of its government did not preserve it from this resentment, policy would in silence make the best use of so surprising an exchange, of persecution for flattery and courtship. But thousands of its best friends are in fear, lest its Protestant zeal, thus stimulated and sanctioned, should involve it too deeply in the modern crusade against Catholics ; and should unconsciously instil through the body, too great an aversion to political and ecclesiastical reform; by reason of the cause being somewhat under the influence and direction of Catholic advocates.

In the present serious agitations of this church, it is easy to discern a confirmation of these fears. For what are the alleged complaints of reforming section against it? That it retains some old maxims of government too nearly resembling Popery, and is even striving to introduce others, still more allied to the genius and spirit of the Romish church. Whether true or false, these are charges which modern agitators bring against it ; and such charges are virtually sanctioned by some of its more indiscreet advocates, in both the pulpit and the press. In short, this excellent community should study, and we hope is studying, not only to moderate its zeal against the Catholic church; but also to preserve all its own departments from whatever may tend, either in discipline or doctrine, to give the errors and superstitions of that church the sanction of its example.

Other dissenting communities excite reflections somewhat different. There are distinct characteristic points in which, amidst loud boasts of the purest Protestantism, they approach the spirit of Popery. Let the Baptists be considered, in their peculiar discipline as such, and without regard to their extreme differences in theological doctrine—some of them professing the lowest socinianism, and others rising to supralapsarian heights. One chief complaint of the Catholics is the severity of their rules, and the absolute terms in which compliance with them, is insisted on—so opposed, as judicious Protestants very properly maintain, to the fundamental principles of Christian discipline and devotion.

But what let it be asked, in a large majority of instances, is the administration of adult baptism in this country? and the demand for it in every disciple as indispensable to Christian communion? A recent administration will furnish an answer. A baptism of adults, both men and women, took place in the last summer, in a small chapel never too cheerful by reason of its being situated in a confined court of London. The days were at the longest, yet the service was deferred till nearly nine o'clock, and was performed by the light of two or three candles. Before a large cistern of water, to which there was a descent by several steps from the floor, stood the minister, clothed in as

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repulsive a habit as he could well have chosen; and while he delivered a long, and by no means encouraging address, the candidates stood on either side with countenances not at all expressive of perfect satisfaction. At length they were successively led by the minister down the steps, and each plunge produced an effect upon the spectators the reverse of that which should attend and follow a Christian observance. It was remarked by a pious family of young persons in departing, that they could as soon submit to all the severities of a convent, and as readily believe that the God of love required the one as the other.

The numerous and in some respects various churches passing under the Independent name, are thought to bear less responsibility on the question of symbolizing with Popery. But there are few of them altogether guiltless. The disposition is more or less betrayed in all—especially in their nominal deacons but real *managers*—while its practical exercise is restrained in the few that are *perfectly* Protestant, by the care taken to preserve a strict independent government, bestowing and claiming the suffrage of all their supporters, and taking care to impose no unseemly yoke—no unchristian burden—of faith or practice upon any.

We find it time to bring these desultory, yet we hope appropriate and seasonable reflections to a close. Their object has been to preserve the reader, especially the young reader, from those errors of the day which are most likely to "corrupt them from the simplicity that is in Christ." If those alone who, by countenancing and scattering these corruptions, "sow to the wind, repeated the whirlwind," our regret would not be so great, nor our anxiety for the rising youth of the land so intense. But the mischief is, that the blindness of bigotry seeks its victims chiefly amidst the innocent and unoffending. The cottage is sure to suffer for every error of the church. When corruption occupies the seat of authority, whether ecclesiastical or political, and proceeds from sources to which the young are taught in their earliest lessons to look with respect, it may be compared to that torrent which originates in the mountain, but commits its devastations in the vale. One important rule should perpetually govern us—to bring every thing, antiquity as well as novelty, to the light of revealed truth. Mystery magnifies danger, as the fog does the sun. The hand that unnerved Belshazzar derived its most horrifying influence from the want of a body; and death itself is not so formidable in what we know of it as in what we know not. Had Miss Reed understood these things in early life, she had never entered the Ursuline convent.

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